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ARCHANT KOS MEDIA Mid North Kent edition IT'S WHAT SUNDAYS ARE ALL ABOUT No.439 February 20, 2011

ONLINE NEWS & SPORT: KENTNEWS.CO.UK | **CAMPAIGN:** KEEP KENT WORKING **PAGES 24-25** | ON SALE 90p

JUDGE RULES SCRAPPING OF BSF SCHEME AN 'ABUSE'

Cash pledge to deprived schools after court win

By **GARETH ARNOLD**

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SCHOOLS in deprived areas of Kent that missed out when the Building Schools for the Future scheme was scrapped will be first in line when new money becomes available.

That is according to Kent County Council leader Cllr Paul Carter speaking after County Hall defeated the Government in a joint legal action with five other local authorities.

Education secretary Michael Gove has been ordered to reconsider his decision to scrap funding for school rebuilding programmes.

In Kent's case, where several schools were just months away from starting work on new buildings, the judge Mr Justice Holman deemed the decision "so unfair as to amount to an abuse of power".

Yet the victory does not mean the schemes will be reinstated, and many Kent schools are still left with outdated and dilapidated buildings. But it does allow Kent and the other five councils – Waltham Forest, Luton Borough Council, Nottingham City Council, Sandwell, and Newham – to apply for compensation.

KCC owes about £10 million to construction companies to honour contracts, cancelled at a late stage after the demise of the BSF scheme.

Cllr Carter told Kent on Sunday he will be writing to Mr Gove laying out the case for compensation, and despite his criticism of the way the BSF scheme was run, the schools that were promised help will eventually get it.

Cllr Carter said: "I'm hoping we're going to get back all the money we owe to contractors, some of whom were very nearly ready to come on site, and which adds up to around £10m.

"The Building Schools for the Future

Continued on page two

A HERO AND HEARTLESS THIEVES

See inside for the full story

Author Bryson's litter campaign

AMERICAN author Bill Bryson is spearheading a campaign to force Network Rail to clear up the country's dirtiest stations.

Among those being targeted by the best-selling writer is Gravesend, which serves some two million passengers a year.

Bryson, who is president of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, and fellow campaigners are seeking a Litter Abatement Order against the rail operator. They say the company continually fails to clear rubbish along tracks at the Kent station.

"If they're not taking this responsibility seriously, we all have the power to compel them to do so," he said.

FULL STORY – PAGE 2

MP backs Radio Caroline licence

PIRATE station Radio Caroline could be back on the air – and legally this time – if a Kent MP gets her way.

Tracey Crouch has launched a Commons campaign to try to win the station a medium wave licence. It currently runs an online service from studios in Strood.

Ms Crouch said: "I have huge affection, as do many listeners, for Radio Caroline. The station is a cornerstone of British radio history and, unbelievably, will celebrate its 50th birthday in 2014."

FULL STORY – PAGE 9

Blake signs new contract at Kent

PROMISING cricket prospect Alex Blake has ended speculation about his future by signing a new three-year deal with Kent.

Blake – in his last year of university at Leeds – penned a contract on Wednesday that will keep him at the St Lawrence Ground until the end of the 2013 season.

"I'm over the Moon," he said. "It's dragged on, but it was never my intention to run down my contract or leave. I'm more than happy to play for Kent."

FULL STORY – SEE SPORT

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Author Bryson wants a clean-up

CLEAN MACHINE: Author Bill Bryson

AMERICAN author Bill Bryson is spearheading a campaign forcing Network Rail to clear up the country's dirtiest train stations, ***writes Marijke Cox***.

One of those in the hall of shame being targeted by the best-selling writer is Gravesend, which serves some two million passengers a year.

Bryson, who is president of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), and his fellow campaigners are seeking a Litter Abatement Order against the rail operator.

They claim the company continually fails to clear rubbish along tracks at the station.

Under a Litter Abatement Order, served via a magistrates' court, a firm legally has to get a long-standing litter problem cleared up.

Bryson said organisations responsible for public land are required to keep it clean.

"If they're not taking this responsibility seriously, we all have the power to compel them to do so," he said.

"Railway operators and Network Rail are not the only offenders, but they are responsible for far too much uncollected litter.

Lack of pride

"The first impression for a visitor arriving in a town is often formed by their view from a train, and it is a disgrace that that view is so often a degraded and dirty one that suggests a lack of care or pride in the area."

To support the move, the CPRE has published a guide to Litter Abatement Orders, helping frustrated members of the public take action.

A Network Rail spokesman said although the operator appreciated the concerns of the CPRE it was surprised the campaign group was encouraging litter abatement notices to be served on them.

"As well as joining us in support of the new Love Where You Live Campaign and following our meeting with CPRE last year, we asked to speak to them again, but the CPRE has not given us a date," he said.

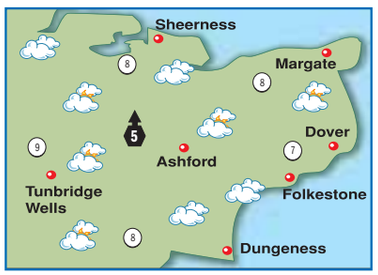
"As one of Britain's biggest landowners we remove thousands of tonnes of litter every year. If reported by the public, we aim to remove litter within 20 days.

"Our dedicated maintenance teams regularly remove litter and we work closely with our contractors and projects to keep the areas in which they work free of litter.

"We are also proud to be a founding member of the Litter Challenge Group and work closely with DEFRA and Keep Britain Tidy."

Bryson's popular book about his travels around Great Britian, Notes From a Small Island, opens with his arrival in Dover and a dreadful stay at a bed and breakfast run by the fearsome 'Mrs Smegma'.

Kent today



TODAY: A fairly cloudy day with just the odd spot of light rain or drizzle. A few brighter interludes will develop, mainly in the east. Gentle southerly winds. Max temp 7-10C (45-50F). **TONIGHT:** It will be dry at first, but rain will push in from the west later. Light winds. Min temp 2-5C (36-41F).

Around Britain

		°C	°F			°C	°F
Aberdeen	rain	6	43	London	cloudy	10	50
Belfast	rain	10	50	Liverpool	cloudy	10	50
Birmingham	cloudy	9	48	Manchester	drizzle	9	48
B'mouth	cloudy	11	52	Newcastle	rain	7	45
Bristol	cloudy	10	50	Norwich	cloudy	8	46
Cardiff	rain	10	50	Oxford	cloudy	10	50
Cork	showers	9	48	Southsea	cloudy	10	50
Edinburgh	rain	8	46	S'hampton	cloudy	10	50
Glasgow	rain	8	46	Southport	cloudy	8	46
Isle of Man	rain	9	48	Swansea	showers	9	48
Leeds	rain	7	45	Torquay	showers	11	52

Sun & moon

Sunrise	7.00am	Sunset	5.18pm	Lighting up times:
Moonrise	8.53pm	Moonset	7.21am	5.18pm to 6.58am

High Tides

	today				tomorrow			
	ht (m)		ht (m)		ht (m)		ht (m)	
Dover	–	–	12.18	6.9	00.42	7.2	13.03	6.9
Margate	00.54	5.0	13.25	4.9	01.38	5.1	14.10	4.9
St Mary's	05.54	6.2	18.17	6.0	06.36	6.2	18.58	5.9

Week ahead

monday Grey. Drizzly. max 10C min6C

tuesday Showers. max 10C min 3C

wednesday Showers. max 8C min 3C

thursday Showers. max 9C min 1C

friday Cloudy. Dry. max 7C min 1C

saturday Cloudy. Dry. max 7C min 2C

'No promise' that schools works will go ahead

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

programme was complicated and bureaucratic, that I will not deny. But the schools that lost out were picked for the programme because they served areas of high deprivation. Now that seems a pretty good way of choosing which schools need to be improved.

"There will be more money available. It is my hope that when the next round of funding comes through, these 14 schools will be first on the list for improvement."

Despite being asked to look again at the decision to scrap the BSF scheme, the Government issued a robust response, claiming the judge's ruling exonerated it on the "substantive points" of the case.

A Government spokesman said: "On the substantive points, he [the judge] concluded it was a rational decision and that the authorities involved had no expectation of being allowed to proceed with their projects."

He also pointed out that the judge had concluded "there was no promise or expectation" that the claimants' projects would proceed.

However, Mr Justice Holman, sitting in London, declared that Mr Gove had unlawfully failed to consult with councils before imposing the cuts.

Cllr Carter, meanwhile, dismissed the Government's claim "as a travesty of the facts".

A Government spokesman confirmed the Secretary of State will look again at his decision "with an open mind" taking representations from the councils involved in the action.

The judge set out, however, that "the final decision on any project still rests with him [Mr Gove] and "no-one should gain false hope from this decision".

His ruling also made it clear that it only extended to the councils that brought the case, closing the door on other authorities hoping to reclaim lost capital.

Wards closed to halt spread of winter vomiting bug

THE winter vomiting bug norovirus has forced two wards to close at Kent and Sussex Hospital.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust said it was routine procedure to shut wards to new patients to stop the spread of the virus.

A spokesman said on Thursday the norovirus is a short-lived infection that usually lasts about 72 hours, and he expected the wards to re-open soon.

The highly contagious bug causes vomiting and diarrhoea and is brought into hospitals by patients and visitors.

People are being encouraged not to visit loved ones on closed wards while the measures are in place in order to stop the spread of germs.

If people feel unwell, especially with vomiting and diarrhoea, they have also been urged not to visit hospitals because their germs will spread to patients.

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Thieves strike as hero enjoys Valentine treat

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

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AFTER six months spent ducking Taliban gunfire in Afghanistan, Major Ian Webster was looking forward to coming home to celebrate Valentine's Day with his wife.

Yet instead the Royal Engineers volunteer discovered the hard way that risking your life for your country earns you no credit from Kent's army of low-life thieves.

That's because the 54-year-old from Boughton, near Faversham – who has represented Great Britain in three triathlon world championships – returned from his Valentine's Day meal to find three expensive bicycles had been stolen from his shed.

"These bikes have been lovingly built up over years, so I know what I'd like to do to the little toerags if I ever got my hands on them," said Major Webster.

"I went down to the shed to go for a ride after spending the night in London and noticed to my horror that the lock had been cut off and the bikes taken.

"Although part of me thinks they're gone for good, these bikes are unique – you can't buy them off the shelf. If anybody sees them they would definitely know it, so I've given the details to all the clubs and societies I'm involved with and asked them to keep an eye out."

Having previously represented Team GB at triathlon events in Canada and Switzerland, Major Webster last pulled on the spandex at the 2007 world championships in Hamburg, Germany, finishing 66th in the 50 to 54 age group.

UNIQUE: Ian Webster with his Cannondale Rush during the South African Cape Epic race

The chartered surveyor was also planning to race at this summer's Escape from Alcatraz event in San Francisco, USA, before the theft of his prized possessions.

But when Major Webster returns to Afghanistan to support the Chatham-based Royal Engineers, the Territorial Army veteran will be more concerned with keeping him and his colleagues safe.

"We're helping to build things like Main Operating Bases (MOBs) and Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), which are pretty close to the action on the frontline," he said.

"For example, we recently built an area for a new CT scanner at a hospital in Fort Bastion. The main risk is obviously for those troops who go out fighting or whose vehicles can be blown up by roadside bombs and so on, but there's no doubt that what we do is very risky too.

"We're constantly being warned about the threat of indirect fire and from time to time we'll hear the alarms going off."

The bikes stolen from Major Webster were a white Merlin Magia, blue Cannondale Rush and black-and-white Ridley Damocles.

Call him on 01227 751466.

Turner's key role

THE arts world has a big role to play in Kent's economic recovery, says the director of the new Turner Contemporary gallery in Margate.

Victoria Pomery believes 2011 is a key year for attracting new visitors to the county and is calling on businesses to ensure they benefit.

Ms Pomery said: "The gallery is going to benefit everyone – regionally, nationally and internationally – and we feel confident of attracting 156,000 visitors a year. It will support the regeneration of Margate and play a key role in the recovery of the local economy."

Turner Contemporary opens on April 16.

A PUBLIC inquiry into Lydd airport's expansion plans has been opened and adjourned. Site visits will be carried out before discussions resume on Tuesday.

The £25 million proposal aims to create a regional passenger airport and includes a new terminal and 300-metre runway extension.

Plans were approved by Shepway council in March, 2010, but opposition on environmental grounds led the Government to order an inquiry.

Supporters say it will bring huge economic benefits and jobs. But there were more than 12,000 objections to the application, claiming the plans would damage important wildlife habitats at Dungeness. A decision is expected in late 2011.

To see this search 'Hever' @ yourkenttv.co.uk

Julie Maddocks speaks to Hever Castle's house manager about accommodation and conference facilities at the venue

SCREEN HIT: But TV's Big Fat Gypsy Wedding series has angered some in the traveller community

Divorced from gypsy reality

IT BECAME cult viewing for millions, giving a glimpse into the secretive world of gypsy and traveller life.

But as Channel 4's Big Fat Gypsy Weddings came to an end on Tuesday, traveller and gypsy communities across Kent said they had been left to pick up the pieces of their tattered reputation.

Chairman of the Gypsy Council, Joe Jones, who lives in Canterbury, said the series had belittled them and created animosity between Romany gypsies and Irish travellers, where some felt a minority had misrepresented the two groups.

"What Channel 4 claimed was a documentary showed extremes of gypsy and traveller life. It wasn't realistic, it was based on stereotypes," he said. "Channel 4 has belittled us and made us a mockery. I've spoken to gypsies across the country who are disgusted with the programme.

"There are gypsy and traveller children at school who are feeling animosity from people who watched it."

About 15,000 gypsies and travellers live in the county, many in houses and others in caravans on the 17 council-run sites across Kent.

The population comprises mainly English Romany gypsies, some Irish travellers and a small number of Scottish and Welsh travellers.

Mr Jones claimed Channel 4 cherry-picked rich gypsies and travellers from across the country who could afford extravagant weddings to ensure compulsive viewing.

"Gypsies' weddings are a lot more low-key – what they showed were the extremes," he said.

He also claimed producers were selective in what they chose to show, leaving out true representations of gypsy and traveller life.

Big Fat Gypsy Weddings – which Mr Jones said should have included the word traveller in the title – attracted about eight million viewers.

Channel 4 defended the show, saying: "The series features a mix of Irish travellers and Romany gypsies and the programme makes a clear distinction between these groups.

"The series is an observational documentary and made predominantly from the perspective of gypsies and travellers talking about their own experiences. We intentionally avoided many commonly held stereotypes and attempted to provide a balanced view."

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High salary votes 'smokescreen'

CUTS NO ICE: Caroline Flint visited Kent

A LEADING Labour politician has branded Coalition proposals to make councils vote on their highest salaries a "smokescreen" for their "bonkers" cuts, ***writes Florence Tennent***.

Caroline Flint, shadow minister for communities and local government, made the comments while attending an open policy review session at the Sunlight Centre, Gillingham, on Wednesday.

She said: "For Eric Pickles to try to suggest that somehow dealing with the senior pay in councils will prevent some of the cuts to frontline services, I think that's a complete smokescreen for the massive cuts councils are trying to find.

"That's the main debate and while we should deal with out-of-hand senior pay, don't let it distract you from what is being asked of local government. Even if you got rid of all senior managers it wouldn't dent the size of the cuts they must make.

"It's nothing compared with the billions councils are being forced to find in the next few years."

Communities minister Mr Pickles this week announced that council salaries of more than £100,000 will have to be agreed in an open session of the full council.

He said: "Councils need to make sure they don't sully their reputation by taking decisions behind closed doors to reward chief executives when they should be focusing on protecting frontline services."

Cllr Paul Godwin, Medway Council's Labour opposition leader, was also at the policy focus group. He said: "It's a gimmick that's going to affect three people in Medway: the chief executive and two other directors. It's a public image issue based on a tiny amount."

Medway Council revealed on Tuesday how it plans to find savings of nearly £30 million over the next two years, with 150 jobs set to go.

Cllr Godwin said: "The cuts are too deep and too fast. We don't think they're tackling things which are less important to people, they've gone straight for the jugular."

County Hall agrees £95m budget cuts

Fears for services as 1,500 jobs to be axed

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

KENT County Council has approved a £95 million savings plan that could result in the loss of up to 1,500 jobs over the next three to four years.

A 10 per cent cut in the amount of cash it receives from the Government has left the authority with a financial mountain to climb, with critics predicting a rapid decline in the level of service currently provided.

The KCC budget for 2011-12 was signed off by the full council on Thursday, when it was also confirmed that council tax will be frozen for a year.

Cabinet members have warned that the authority will have to make efficiency savings of £38m from having fewer staff, and that policy changes – such as cutting the amount spent on the Connexions service for young people – will save an additional £36m.

BIG PICTURE: Council leader Cllr Paul Carter

The council also plans to increase social care charges, slash £2.6m funding for children's centres, and double the price of the popular Freedom Pass travel scheme for most young people from £50 to £100.

However, a brief respite has been granted to users of "uneconomic" bus routes who learned that funding will continue until the end of 2011.

Labour group leader Cllr Leslie Christie said: "The Conservative group is behaving irrationally while failing to protect the people of Kent from the worst excesses of the Tory-led Government.

"On the one hand it proposes to set up a new fund of £5m just to support the Government's aspirations for the so-called Big Society, while simultaneously taking money from children and the elderly.

"This is the Kent Tories' idea of the Big Society – to spend millions to support David Cameron's woolly dreams while threatening our children's life chances and denying choice to the elderly."

Despite the huge savings KCC still plans to spend £772m over the next three years, including £173m on roads and £296m on schools. This year it will pump an extra £6m into children's social services and £9m into elderly and adult social care.

Lib Dem group leader Cllr Trudy Dean criticised the level of detail in the budget.

"There are many sections we don't know anything about," she said. "There will be lots of reviews of various services but we're not being told for what purpose.

"Are we talking about closing youth centres or cutting funding for voluntary organisations? We don't know. Does the cabinet know? Either way, we are being kept in the dark.

"But it's clear the people being hit hardest are our staff. Our staff are as important as Pfizer's so it's important we say goodbye to them properly."

The budget was approved on Thursday following several hours of debate, with 55 voting in favour and just nine against. One councillor abstained.

KCC leader Cllr Paul Carter said: "Staff reductions are not easy for any of us and we will do all we can to reduce compulsory redundancies as far as possible.

"The pound in all our pockets is shrinking but we have to look at the big picture – £95m and £65m over the next two years has to be found in these difficult and challenging times, and this council is doing its best to restore the country's public finances."

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A FORMER soldier has been found guilty of trying to murder his pregnant wife by booby-trapping her car with a grenade.

Nicholas Fabian, 33, pictured, denied attempted murder and causing an explosion likely to endanger life, but a jury returned a guilty verdict at Maidstone Crown Court on Thursday.

Victoria Fabian suffered serious leg injuries in the explosion at their home in Vigo, near Gravesend, in March, 2010.

Her eight-year-old son, who was also in the car, and her unborn child were unharmed.

The court heard Fabian, who was having an affair with a female work colleague, had booby-trapped his wife's car.

The reservist soldier, due to be posted to Afghanistan later that month, stole a grenade while undergoing Army training in north Yorkshire. It was set to explode once the car moved away.

Fabian told the court he did not plant the grenade and insisted he tried to save his wife's life.

Mrs Fabian remained in hospital for two months after the explosion before giving birth to a boy.

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THE INTERVIEW

BY ED HILL

The mouse that rapped

CHILDREN'S books become embedded in our common culture if they are successful.

Mr Men, The Cat In The Hat, Where The Wild Things Are, all have been passed down the generations. But creating something with such broad appeal is no easy trick.

Genevieve Webster, 45, is one of the brains behind Rastamouse, a streetwise skateboarding, reggae-playing rodent.

She created the character in 2002 with Michael de Souza, a swimming instructor who is a Rastafarian.

The former Folkestone Grammar girl said: "Michael was teaching swimming to kids and he was using rhyme. I had always been impressed with the poetry. It was just a natural progression that we worked in rhyme when it came to doing the books."

The duo decided to self-publish so they could have more control. They set up Little Roots publishing, to avoid dealing with big publishing houses.

Genevieve said: "Using rhyme is quite unusual for children's publishing these days. Publishers don't want rhyming books because they're hard to translate for other languages. We never set out to do something massively commercial. We just thought there was a gap in the market because there were no black animal characters in children's literature."

Rastamouse is joined by his two friends, Zoomer and Scratchy. The books have been acclaimed for their contemporary characters and language which encourages children to read.

Genevieve said: "They are drawn from everyday life. For example, Zoom is a bit like my daughter, who was rushing around at that time.

"Both Michael and I had done a lot of work with children. We knew we could talk to them without being patronising. There still has to be a good meaty story. Some children's books you never want to pick up again once you have read them the first time.

"There's also a rap element which helps attract boys and makes them want to read."

Three books have been published so far and the stories were read on Jackanory by Lenny Henry, adding to their success.

Genevieve said: "Every language has its own rhythms. The Caribbean way of speaking is full of warmth. It's also fun for parents. I want them to enjoy reading it, too."

IT'S A RAP: Rastamouse, Scratchy and Zoomer were created by Genevieve Webster (inset) and Michael de Souza

Genevieve grew up in Kent. After leaving school she studied art in Canterbury before making her name as an illustrator and author.

"I love going back to my roots to visit family, but I was always attracted to London. It's so diverse and people just accept that's the way it is. Canterbury wasn't like that when I was younger, although that is changing," she said.

The success of the books inevitably led to interest from television, but the creators waited until they felt the time was right before transferring to the small screen.

"We were approached by big animation companies from the start, but they didn't seem right. Because we had grown the characters ourselves we knew what we wanted."

Now 52 episodes have been created for CBeebies and the characters are reaching a huge new audience.

Genevieve said: "Three Stones Media came along and they got the whole concept right from the start. We wanted to do stop frame animation and we wanted to give it to people we trusted.

"On the day I went along to see the first puppet I was speechless. I was amazed how they had taken something from two dimensions and turned into something in three and still kept the spirit of the character."

A team of writers was brought together, but Genevieve edited the scripts to ensure they captured the original feel.

She said: "It's been a fascinating process transforming it for television, using more dialogue and telling the stories in a different visual way."

Now it seems all the early hard work and belief has paid off. She said: "Self-publishing is a lot of work but we wanted to do it properly. We invested our own money for the first book. You have to be up for the hard slog, but it is more satisfying because we now have all the rights and it makes dealing with things a lot simpler."

A new book will soon be in the pipeline, although most children will now first get to know Rastamouse on the TV screen.

Genevieve said: "I'm not against new media – it's important not to be snobbish about how a story is told – but the other day my daughter said to me just how much she loved reading a book and going to bed without a headache after looking at a screen.

"The great thing about writing for children is they will follow you, however weird and wonderful the story and the characters.

"I didn't think: how will this work for children? It's more about me drawing the character and developing it. It's a happy accident that it also works for a younger audience.

"This has all happened at the right speed and right time. If we'd done TV after the first book I wouldn't have known the characters well enough."

Rastamouse continues on CBeebies.

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Coastal areas see a record rise in voters

By MARIJKE COX
marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

SHEPWAY has seen the biggest number of new voters in the country registering to make their voice heard at the ballot box.

The coastal area of Folkestone, Hythe, Dymchurch and Romney, saw a 9.2 per cent rise between 2009 and 2010, compared to the 1.5 per cent increase seen across the UK.

Thanet District Council also saw a boost, with an extra 4.3 per cent joining the electoral roll.

Data experts from marketing company Equifax, which drew up a report on electoral roll statistics, said although it reflected the fact there was an election in 2010, it also indicated renewed political engagement.

Shepway District Council put the increase down to the hard work and door-stepping of the authority's staff as part of a campaign ensuring households were signed up to vote.

More than 94 per cent of all homes in the area completed electoral application forms, with 81,143 people now registered.

Tory MP Damian Collins was voted in at the general election, replacing former Conservative leader Michael Howard, who stood down as MP for Folkestone and Hythe.

In Thanet, Labour MP Steve Ladyman lost his South Thanet seat to Tory Laura Sandys, and senior backbench Conservative MP Roger Gale held the Isle's north seat.

External affairs director for Equifax, Neil Munroe, said the sharp increase in registrations was undoubtedly due to the general election, but also the public's desire for a voice.

"It is certainly a good sign for democracy in the wake of the new political landscape," he said.

"The increase could also be good news for local government, with more than 80 per cent of councils seeing an increase in their registered electorate for the coming year.

"With more voters registered, this could help them obtain a bigger share of budgets from central Government in the next financial year."

Shepway council leader Cllr Robert Bliss said: "It's not just about voting. When your name is on the electoral roll, it helps with things like mortgages and credit ratings, so it's important to make sure you are included."

While Shepway and Thanet topped the list, others in Kent saw a decline in registered electorate.

Dartford Borough Council, Swale Borough Council and Bexley authority all had slight decreases in the number of voters.

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POLITICAL VOICE: More residents are signing up to have their say

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Radio Caroline ready to rock the boat again

By MATHEW BEECH

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AN ICON of 1960s pop music is campaigning to make a broadcasting comeback.

Radio Caroline is hoping to return to the airwaves by being granted a medium wave licence.

The former pirate radio station which broadcast from a ship, currently plays via the internet and digital TV from studios in Strood.

Chatham and Aylesford MP Tracey Crouch has now backed a campaign to grant the station a medium wave licence.

She said: "I have a huge affection, as do many of its listeners, for Radio Caroline.

"My dad was a keen listener and amateur disc jockey, so it's something I've grown up with. The station is one of the most well-known in the world, it's a cornerstone of British radio history, and unbelievably will celebrate its 50th birthday in 2014.

"However, it has been denied an opportunity to secure a MW frequency so that listeners can enjoy the station in transit, rather than via the internet or through Sky TV."

Thanet Tory MP Roger Gale was a DJ on the station before he entered the world of politics.

Miss Crouch presented an Early Day Motion in Parliament calling on Ofcom to allow special dispensation for Radio Caroline to broadcast in the South East on medium wave. So far, it has been backed by 52 other MPs.

Radio Caroline first publicly broadcast on Easter Sunday in 1964, and its glory days lasted until August 1967, when the Marine Broadcasting Offences Act was passed.

The story of the pirate station was the inspiration for the hit Richard Curtis movie The Boat That Rocked, starring Rhys Ifans.

Peter Moore, current station manager of Radio Caroline, told the BBC: "We didn't go and put a radio station on a boat because we particularly liked boats. We put a radio station on a boat because it was, at that time, the only way of having a commercial music radio station."

MR DJ: Rhys Ifans in The Boat That Rocked

Radio Caroline continued to broadcast following the Marine Broadcasting Offences Act, although many other pirate radio stations left the airwaves.

But Radio Caroline suffered financial problems when backers pulled out, and in March 1968, two tugs approached the radio ship, cut the anchors and towed her to the Netherlands to be impounded for an outstanding debt.

Radio Caroline is now broadcast legally online and via satellite and the station.

Former Radio Caroline DJ, Roger Day, now a presenter on BBC Radio Kent said: "There's a bit of the rebel in all of us and Caroline always has had that rebel image, it's never shaken it.

"I guess everyone likes to be a bit anti-establishment and even if it's given a legal licence, there will still be a bit of naughtiness about listening to Radio Caroline as there always was."

MAKING WAVES: Radio Caroline's ship

'Hooligan' is coming home

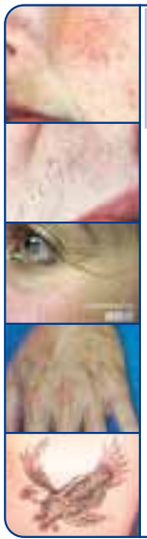
A FORMER firefighter who was jailed in Portugal for football hooliganism during the Euro 2004 Championship will be allowed to return to Britain to serve the remainder of his sentence.

Garry Mann, 53, was extradited to Portugal last May after a six-year legal battle claiming he would not get a fair trial.

Mann, who lived in Faversham with his family and always denied being involved in a riot, has been told he will be allowed to serve the rest of his sentence in Britain.

Fair Trials International revealed his transfer has been accepted in principle although no details have been given of the jail where he will serve the remainder of his two-year sentence, or when he will return.

Birmingham City supporter Mann was arrested and tried within 48 hours of the June, 2004, riot in which he says he was accidentally caught up.



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Science rocks

VISITORS to the Kent Festival of Science at Canterbury College over half term will be able rock out as they learn about physics.

Dr Mark Lewney will be staging his show Rock Guitar in 11 Dimensions, during the two-day event at the college's campus in New Dover Road.

The show explores the science of sound and vibrations, and explains the physics of riffs from Vivaldi to AC/DC. The festival, for all ages, will also feature shows such as The Creepy Crawly Man, The Amazing Bubble Show, The Air Show, The Magic of Science, Inferno and much more.

It runs from 9.30am-3.30pm on Wednesday and Thursday February 23-24. Tickets cost £7. For information and tickets visit www.sciencefestival.org.uk.

Net dating scam

LONELY hearts have been warned of online dating scams that could cost them thousands of pounds.

The scams involve the victim joining an online dating service or being contacted by someone who is "looking for romance", but happens to live overseas.

Kent Trading Standards say that before long the scam victim will be asked for money for a "financial emergency" such as hospital bills for a sick child.

Information on scams can also be found at www.consumerdirect.gov.uk or call 08454 040506.

A TELEVISION has been stolen from a charity shop. The black TV, worth £140, was taken from The Children's Trust shop in Gabriels Hill, Maidstone, between 3-5pm on Tuesday, February 8.

Police would like to hear from anyone who may have seen someone acting suspiciously in the charity shop, or carrying a TV along Gabriels Hill that day.

RAIL bosses will fit de-icing equipment to passenger trains to tackle the cold snap chaos on Kent's transport system, ***writes Marijke Cox***.

Network Rail said the move would improve problems seen when the conductor rail used on the county's lines freezes and brings services grinding to a halt.

There are 20 purpose-built de-icing trains which run along the network at night, spraying de-icer on the tracks.

A Network Rail spokesman said if passenger trains were fitted with the equipment, a greater area would be covered.

"The conductor – or third – rail does struggle during very cold conditions and we need to continue to make it more resilient," he said.

"We're working with Southeastern on increasing resources to improve services."

Plans were revealed following a succession of meetings in Parliament to discuss problems with the rail service during the winter months.

Failings

Network Rail bosses admitted at a meeting with MPs they were "not proud" of the catalogue of failings seen by Kent's long-suffering train commuters.

In December, hundreds of passengers were left stranded on freezing platforms and trains with little communication or information from operator Southeastern.

The disruption came just weeks before Southeastern introduced a massive increase in fares, where season ticket prices on some Kent routes rose by as much as 12.8 per cent.

Thanet North MP Roger Gale, who has been campaigning for better services and lower fare increases in east Kent, chaired last week's discussions with Network Rail, which were arranged by Maidstone MP Helen Grant.

Public Information Days
Kentish Flats Offshore Wind Farm Proposed Extension

Vattenfall, a leading European energy company, would like to extend its Kentish Flats Offshore Wind Farm (also known as the Whitstable or Herne Bay Wind Farm) with up to 17 wind turbines beside the current 30.

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Beacon Hill
Herne Bay

Thursday 24 February
2pm - 8pm
Whitstable Castle
Tower Hill
Whitstable

For further information:
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Call: 0 7545 339 299
Post: Mandy Broughton, Kentish Flats Extension, Vattenfall Wind Power, 10 Greycoat Place, London, SW1P 1SB

VATTENFALL

FAILINGS: Southeastern has failed to compensate commuters for delays

De-icers to improve winter rail services

Mr Gale said the group of Kent MPs appreciated the open manner in which Network Rail, which owns Britain's rail infrastructure, explained the difficulties it faced and the measures being taken to mitigate further disruption.

"We note that while Network Rail has paid compensation to Southeastern, Southeastern has yet to make any gesture of compensation to commuters, who have paid high fares for a very poor service.

"It is also clear that considerable further investment will be needed from the Department for Transport to pay for some of the necessary improvements.

"Kent members are taking this up with the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

Dave Ward, Kent route director for Network Rail, explained how changed software systems, the use of anti-icing trains running in service, and selective conductor rail heating, among other changes, would lead to an improved winter performance in the future.

MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey Gordon Henderson, who also attended the meeting, said Mr Ward explained the weaknesses of the existing communications system and how he hoped the introduction of a 'Passenger Information During Disruption System' would create improvements.

But Mr Henderson said it was clear to MPs the existing computer programme remained unsatisfactory.

"My colleagues and I wanted to highlight to Network Rail the frustrations being experienced by rail users in the area, particularly those, like my own constituents, who use the Kent coast line," he said.

Maidstone MP Helen Grant said she was heartened by Network Rail's proposals for improvement, although she admitted there was still a long way to go.

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Swimming spectator dies

A WOMAN has collapsed and died while watching a swimming lesson.

The woman, in her 50s, was taken ill at the council-run Splashes Leisure Centre in Bloors Lane, Rainham, at about 6.30pm on Monday, February 14, before she later passed away.

She was with a boy who is believed to have been participating in the Junior Fins swimming class for children aged between six and 10-years-old.

A council spokesman said: "We can confirm that a woman in the spectator area of the swimming pool at Splashes Leisure Centre collapsed while watching swimming lessons on Monday evening.

"Staff attempted to resuscitate the woman and the ambulance service was called. Sadly, the woman later died.

"As is normal procedure, the council has reported this to the Health and Safety Executive."

An investigation into her death is now under way.

Third crossing 'just an option'

COUNTY Hall's new roads chief has admitted he is opposed to one of his party's flagship transport policies, ***writes Marijke Cox***.

The portfolio holder for environment, highways and waste, Cllr Bryan Sweetland, said before accepting the position he met Tory leader Cllr Paul Carter to discuss his opposition to plans for a third Thames crossing.

The proposals, which are outlined in Kent County Council's landmark Growth Without Gridlock strategy, would see a tunnel built between the east of Gravesend and Chadwell in Essex, to ease pressure on the Dartford bridge and tunnel.

The plan has come up against mass opposition, including Gravesham Borough Council, for which Cllr Sweetland is a member.

The former telecommunication manager also represents Gravesham East on Kent County Council.

He said: "I'm a local councillor for Gravesham, and the priority for me is representing the residents.

"It's not in their best interests to have a third Thames crossing close to their homes.

"What KCC has expressed is a preferred option. It's not something I particularly agree with, but it's only one option at this moment.

"I do think we're still a way off this – there's a long way to go yet."

He added: "I spoke to Paul Carter before I accepted the post and said my first priority was the people I represent."

Cllr Carter says a Thames crossing at Gravesham East is KCC's preferred option.

PRIORITY: Cllr Bryan Sweetland says he puts residents' needs first

He called the plan a "no-brainer".

Gravesham council leader Mike Snelling said the proposal would see marshland and countryside of international scientific importance sacrificed, and rural life threatened.

"No-one doubts the need for extra capacity, but it is obvious that increasing capacity at Dartford and getting rid of toll booths would not only be cheaper, but also could begin to ease congestion infinitely quicker," he added.

Cllr Sweetland said he was pleased to be joining the cabinet at such an exciting time, with the recent launch of the Growth Without Gridlock report, which sets out transport regeneration plans over the next two decades.

"This is a good document looking at providing a high level strategy for Kent for the next 20 years," he said.

"It doesn't just look at the problems, but offers solutions and looks at funding. We need to have a good local infrastructure, such as a better use of Manston Airport and a parkway station, which could help with the future use of the Pfizer site.

"If we've got a good infrastructure we're more likely to be successful in encouraging firms to locate in Kent."

Cllr Sweetland, who joined KCC in June 2009, was a senior manager in the telecommunication industry, working for companies such as BT and Verizon, for more than 30 years.

With extensive business experience in the UK and internationally, he held KCC's portfolio for commercial services and business from May, 2007, to February, 2009.

Under the restructuring taking place in April at KCC, environment, highways and waste will be managed by the new enterprise and environment department.

Asked whether his commercial acumen was the reason behind his appointment, he said: "I think my background was a factor."

Legal fight begins over frozen Icelandic millions

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

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LAWYERS representing Kent County Council have finally started a courtroom battle to recoup some of the £50 million frozen in Icelandic banks.

The authority has so far only recovered a fraction of the money it had tied up in Iceland's banking system, which collapsed in September, 2008, creating huge problems for investors throughout Europe.

So far, KCC has received £9.1m back from the UK-based Heritable Bank, which owes a total of £18m, but nothing of the remaining £17m placed with Landsbanki, or £15m with Glitnir.

The court case, which started in Iceland last week, is to decide whether councils should be considered as preferential creditors when it comes to distributing the assets of Landsbanki. A similar case taken by the creditors for Glitnir is scheduled for March. KCC was first made aware of the need for a legal battle back in December, 2009.

Cabinet member for finance, Cllr John Simmonds, said at the time: "We expected our claim as a preferential creditor to be challenged because there are a lot of unseen creditors out there and a lot of muscle, too.

"I'm still reasonably confident of a positive outcome. It's nothing more than a hiccup."

Cllr Simmonds said last week that he still expected the council to recover 90-95 per cent of the money frozen in Iceland.

The court is not expected to deliver its verdict for about the next eight weeks.

Hollywood to Gad's Hill

PSYCHIC: Matt Damon in Hereafter

HOLLYWOOD star Matt Damon promotes the work of Kent's greatest literary talent in his latest film, Hereafter.

Damon plays the role of a reluctant psychic with a passion for the works of Charles Dickens in the Clint Eastwood-directed movie, which reached UK cinemas last week after a successful run in the United States.

Such is his character's love for the former Medway resident's books, the film sees Damon travel to London to attend a book reading performed by veteran actor Derek Jacobi.

Jacobi spoke to KOS Media in October, 2009, to promote a new Sky documentary on the great author's life.

He said: "Dickens was associated so much with Kent, particularly at Gad's Hill [near Rochester] where he lived for so long.

"I think he felt quite at home in the area, and quite content, too.

"He found the landscape beautiful to look at and peaceful to be surrounded by, and it was conducive to his writing."

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'Households on brink' warning

HOUSING charity Shelter says new figures show 135 households in Gravesham are on the brink of losing their homes.

The Ministry of Justice statistics show the number of local homeowners and tenants at risk of repossession or eviction has increased by 42 per cent from the previous quarter.

The charity has launched a campaign to Save the Housing Safety Net and is calling on people in Gravesham to sign a petition urging MPs to stop changes going through Parliament it claims will reduce protection for those whose homes are under threat.

Shelter chief executive Campbell Robb said: "It's a sign of the tough times we're in that every two minutes someone faces losing their home. In Gravesham alone, 135 households are at risk.

"I hope people in Gravesham will sign our petition to urge the Government to think again about the impact of these changes on those who may need temporary support to stay afloat in the months ahead."

See www.shelter.org.uk/safetynet for more information.

Viaduct joint works aim to cut road noise

A NEW noise reduction technique is being tested at the Littledale viaduct on the A2, near Dartford.

A new expansion joint, which has not previously been used in the UK, is being fitted in a bid to reduce noise from the viaduct.

Expansion joints allow bridges and viaducts to safely expand and contract when temperatures fluctuate.

Highways Agency project manager John Martin said: "Residents have been affected by the 'thud' of the joints as heavy vehicles travel over them.

"The new joints provide a running surface similar to the existing road, and will, we believe, reduce the noise from passing vehicles."

The joint replacement will take place in two phases between Saturday, February 26, and Sunday, March 13.

Name your day in the

By **FLORENCE TENNENT**

florence.tennent@kosmedia.co.uk

ORGANISERS of the Year in a Life photography project are asking volunteers to sponsor a page in their 2011 compendiums.

The community project invites amateur and professional photographers to snap people, places, animals and events in their area, everyday, for a year.

The best 365 daily submissions are selected by a panel to be displayed in an exhibition, a book and a calendar charting the history of the community through its own eyes.

The scheme started in Faversham and this year extended to the Isle of Sheppey and Canterbury, with almost 150 photographers contributing daily to the three projects.

In order to fund the final displays, Kent Creative Arts, the non-profit arts organisation running the scheme, is offering people the chance to sponsor a page in each of the books.

Nathalie Banaigs, project founder, said: "The idea is you can associate your name or the name of a loved one to one of the 365 pages.

"Your support will mean a lot, allowing this wonderful record of our towns to take shape."

Sponsors will be able to pick a date in the year and have a name appear on that page, along with mention of a special occasion or event if they wish. Ms Banaigs first came up with the idea for a Year in the Life in 2007 when she moved to Faversham from Paris.

SHORELINE: Sunday, February 6 – below Minster Cliffs, Sheppey, by Trevor Jones

The initial 2008 exhibition was mounted on wire fences and one picture had to be found on a photo-sharing website after it was realised they were missing a day.

In 2010 the show was expanded after grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and borough and county councils, among others.

To get involved with the project or to see examples of photos submitted so far, visit www.kentcreativearts.co.uk/a-year-in-the-life/. Alternatively, see www.kentcreativearts.co.uk/sponsorship-individuals/ to find out how to sponsor a page.

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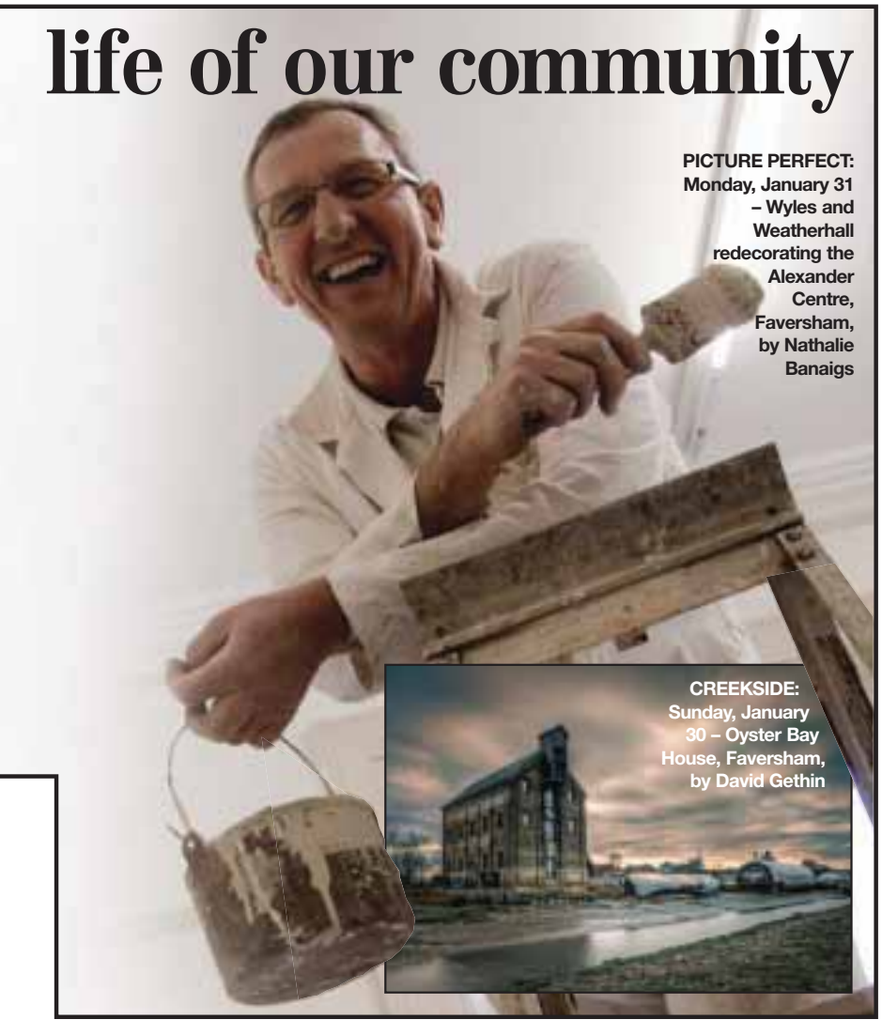

PICTURE PERFECT: Monday, January 31 – Wyles and Weatherhall redecorating the Alexander Centre, Faversham, by Nathalie Banaigs

CREEKSIDE: Sunday, January 30 – Oyster Bay House, Faversham, by David Gethin

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Not enough money for dementia care

By **MATHEW BEECH**

mathew.beech@kosmedia.co.uk

RESPITE for carers and dementia patients is being put under threat, as budget cuts take their toll on support groups.

At the launch of two new support groups, the Alzheimer's Society warned it is not able to provide the level of care and support it would like, due to economic restraints.

The new groups, in Canterbury and Dover, come as the Alzheimer's Society released a report saying there are 17,000 people in Kent with dementia – and that number is expected to reach 24,000 by 2021.

Alzheimer's Society Kent manager, Tina Stirling, said: "We need more funding, and we are always looking to open up more avenues for funding.

"Our partners in health and social care recognise the benefits of the support groups and are keen for us to open more, but they need funding and there isn't any."

A report published this month found 50 per cent of carers in the South East said the person they looked after with dementia was not receiving sufficient care and support.

Now a dementia café and peer support groups have been unveiled, to help ensure patients and carers receive the support and the care they require.

The Dementia Café in Canterbury is an opportunity for sufferers and their carers to learn more about the condition and to share their experiences, while also meeting new people, while the peer support group in Dover is for people in the early stages of dementia to gain support and information.

THREAT: Support for dementia sufferers and carers could be hit by spending cuts

Mrs Stirling said: "Dementia cafés and peer support groups are fantastic places to relax, meet new people and learn more about dementia.

"The number of people with dementia in Kent is rising rapidly so it's vital that good quality services are in place.

"Dementia can happen to anyone and there is currently no cure. But with the right support, people can live well with dementia throughout the condition."

An additional dementia café is due to open in Whitstable in March, while another peer support group will welcome dementia sufferers in Tenterden later this month.

Call for TV ban in kids' bedrooms

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

FLOELLA Benjamin has called for children to be banned from having television sets in their bedrooms.

The former Play School and Play Away presenter, now Baroness Benjamin of Beckenham, urged ministers to wake up to a "crisis in children's programming" during a debate in the House of Lords.

TV PRESENTER: Baroness Benjamin

She said that while the programmes she hosted in the 1970s had the well-being of their viewers at heart, many today were instead being used as a replacement for parenting.

"Programmes like these should be banned," she said.

"In fact, I would ban all television and computers in children's bedrooms."

Born in Trinidad, the 61-year-old Lib Dem moved to England with her family at the age of 10, and arrived in Penge, Bromley, before settling in Beckenham.

One of three new peers appointed last June, Baroness Benjamin told the House of Lords that appropriate children's television was beneficial to childhood development.

"It can improve attention, expressive language, comprehension, articulation and general knowledge, as well as social interaction and life skills," she said. "I urge the Government and broadcasters to wake up to the crisis in the production and quality of public service broadcasting for children.

"I ask the Government to find creative ways of funding to maintain the traditional well-made British pre-school programmes."

Benjamin was awarded an OBE for services to broadcasting in 2001, and has also served as chairman of Bafta.

Funeral costs on the increase

UNDERTAKERS are concerned that grieving families will struggle to cope with planned increases in the costs of funerals in Medway.

Medway Council plans to raise prices by up to 20 per cent, with the average cost of a ceremony up by eight per cent, to about £1,600.

The authority also wants to increase the cost of natural burials by 28 per cent, and the cost providing crosses to mark people's graves by about 50 per cent.

Undertaker John Weir told the BBC many families may have to seek financial assistance to pay for funerals.

A Medway Council spokesman said the move was a result of Government cuts.

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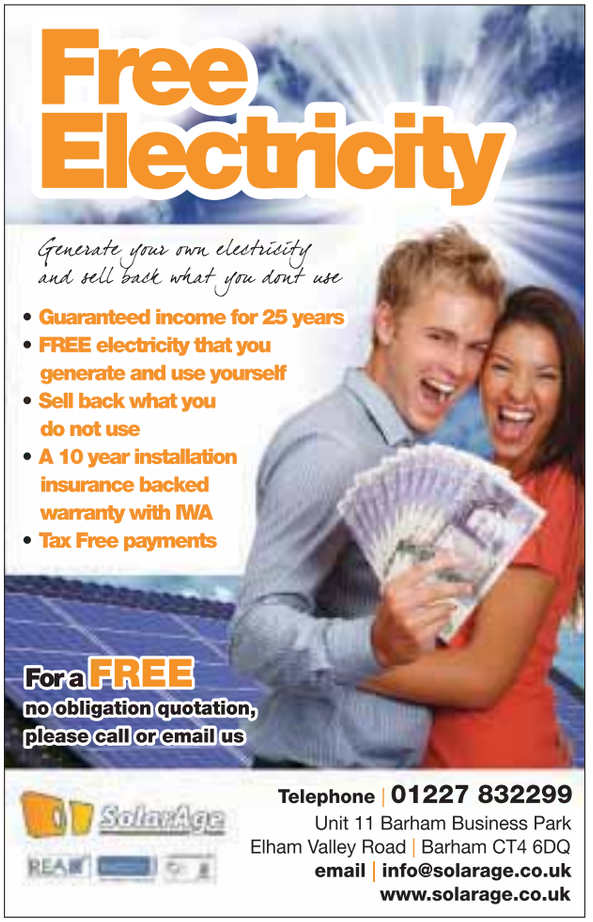

'Volunteers are the Big Society, but their work is threatened by cuts'

VOLUNTARY groups in Kent believe Government spending cuts are undermining David Cameron's Big Society vision, ***writes Steve Knight.***

The Prime Minister said last week that it was his "mission" to make the initiative succeed, just days after the outgoing head of the Community Service Volunteers – Dame Elisabeth Hoodless – said the "massive" council cuts would make it harder for people to do more.

John Guy of Hands & Gillingham Volunteer Centre is one of many third-sector workers to have backed Dame Elisabeth's comments.

He said: "As far as we're concerned the Big Society already exists – it's not a dream. But the Government has completely misunderstood what volunteering is all about and is getting it mixed up with social enterprise, which is when people want to get something off the ground locally.

"If the Government is reducing its funding to local authorities and there is less money for voluntary groups to take up the slack, then I can't help but feel the whole concept is doomed to failure.

"The voluntary sector is already delivering, so it's crazy to make it even more difficult for us to do what we're doing successfully."

The Government says it will be investing £470 million in charities and voluntary groups over the next four years to give them independence from state money.

And Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude says there will be a £100m transition fund within months to help charities hit by cuts.

However, the news has done little to ease volunteers' fears.

"We are very concerned and still waiting to hear to what extent the cuts will affect organisations like us," said Barbara Williams, manager of Volunteer Centre Tonbridge.

"On the one hand there is a great expectation for people to contribute more, but on the other hand the agencies that exist to support the voluntary sector are having to find other ways to carry on.

"Everyone knows about the charity shops in the high street but there are a lot of other charities that rely on organisations like us to provide people to work in the office, make tea and so on."

MISSION: David Cameron has been accused of confusing volunteering with social enterprise

Meanwhile, the CSV has won a Big Lottery Fund grant of more than £220,000 to engage older people living in residential care homes across Kent and Medway.

The project will work across 100 establishments in the county with the aim of increasing mental stimulation among the participants while helping to forge inter-generational links with the community.

Fourth pay freeze prompts strike ballot for Post Office clerks

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

POST Office clerks are being asked to go on strike in a row over pay, job security and the future of the service.

About 150 counter staff in Kent – all members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) – have been sent ballot papers, after being denied a pay rise for the fourth year running.

The union says this is despite increased profits at Post Office Ltd (POL) of £72 million last year, with managers winning a 2.25 per cent raise and directors an extra 21 per cent in pay and benefits.

There are now concerns the firm may be considering asking its clerks, who earn about £19,000 on average, to take pay cuts of up to 30 per cent to put them in line with staff in privately run sub-post offices or franchises (non-Crown Post Offices).

"POL is showing callous indifference to the work and living standards of hard-working counter staff, while at the same time increasing pay for managers and directors," said CWU representative for Kent, Mole Meade.

"It's double standards and fat cat economics in the extreme.

"This is particularly hard for staff in Kent, where living costs are higher than in the rest of the country.

"POL is being deliberately provocative by saying our members are overpaid, compared with staff in privately-run sub-post offices and franchises. The reality is that these workers are disgracefully exploited, with pay rates barely above minimum wage."

The Kent counter staff are among 4,000 CWU members nationwide who have until March 4 to vote for or against industrial action.

Should the majority register a 'yes' vote, they will have 28 days in which they can legally go on strike, subject to seven days' notice being given.

In the meantime the CWU has written to Moya Greene – chief executive of the Post Office's parent company Royal Mail – making it clear the union remains open for talks.

Post Office managing director Paula Vennells is urging the CWU to withdraw its ballot notification.

She said: "The Crown Post Office network is losing £55m a year, and we regret the fact the CWU is unwilling to engage in a constructive dialogue.

"We know having no pay increase is a very difficult message for our staff. The unfortunate reality, however, is that the Crown Post Office network is loss-making. Industrial action will only harm our customers."

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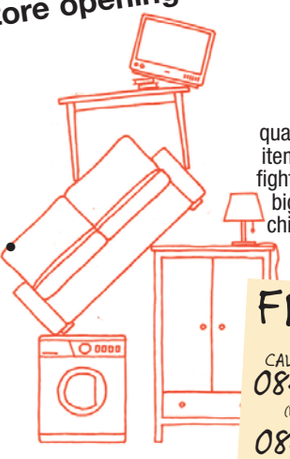

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LETTERS

KOS Media welcomes your comments and letters for publication. Please send correspondence to: Letters to the Editor, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SS. Alternatively fax them to: 01303 817001, or email them to editorial@kosmedia.co.uk. Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances. Please also include a daytime telephone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit letters.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Let's get tough on the vandals

I applaud the setting up of the operation against vandals and thieves by English Heritage, the police, local authorities and communities. For too long historic sites and places that rely on donations and volunteers have incurred additional costs through vandalism and metal theft.

I urge the courts to get tough with these people. Their actions are destroying our precious history and costing organisations dear with rocketing insurance premiums.

The destruction of hours of hard work by volunteers can be soul-destroying, especially when these morons are actually caught and then get a small fine or are let off.

Hopefully this pioneering action will spread and will encourage people to help protect their heritage.

I am a supporter of heritage railways such as the East Kent Railway, Kent and East Sussex Railway and the Remembrance Line at Folkestone harbour.

It is so upsetting to see months of hard work by volunteers – renovating, restoring and repairing old buildings, carriages and trains – destroyed by graffiti vandals overnight and I sincerely hope that this new operation will deter and catch these criminals.

Well done to all concerned.

D Wiffen, Bexley

OPINION: BACK TO THE ISLE'S FUTURE

Pro-Thanet campaigner **JOAN GODDARD** calls for an updated return to the isle's British Riviera tourism heyday, not more airport-driven industrial fantasising

WHAT to do about Thanet? This thought is uppermost in people's minds, with devastating Government cuts looming and the closure of Pfizer.

Perhaps we can learn that it doesn't pay to put all your eggs in one basket, although local politicians seem hell-bent on doing this again by bleating on about Manston at every opportunity.

When was the Isle of Thanet most successful? Everyone knows it was in the 1950s and '60s, when we were the British Riviera. Affluent from the proceeds of holidaymakers and living in an area of fun and optimism, surrounded by excellent facilities, rural heritage, world-class beaches, walks, cycling and wildlife, not to mention the special nature of the architecture in our coastal towns. I used to holiday here myself in those days, loving the laid-back life of its people.

What is the nature of our decline? Undoubtedly, disastrous management from successive councils over many years, plus a lack of pride in a once-great area, their inability to think laterally and invest in trends, together with the advent of cheap holidays abroad.

We now have an area with high benefit dependency, a large population who cannot speak English and serial non-jobseekers. How many empty homes and office buildings do we have dotted around? And what is the chance of these being used in future? We're still blessed with our heritage. We have architecture to rival Brighton's Lanes, the sea defences and cliffs provide miles of invigorating walking and cycling, and we are close to London, with good railway stations at Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Margate.

Thanet is rich indeed. As families cannot afford to go abroad due to the downturn, we have a small window of opportunity and should be preparing for a revival. Dreamland should be a priority for London day-trippers in particular. Until Thanet Distict Council and the leader of Kent County Council decide whether we are to be industrialised or a tourist destination, we have no hope of either. Instead, with regular monotony, we have the virtues of a failing Manston airport thrust upon us. What a joke.

David Foley, chief executive of Thanet and East Kent Chamber of Commerce, even saw fit to say on television that "we know an airport produces 1,000 jobs per million passengers".

What a foolhardy and cruel statement that is, suggesting a promise for what is not there.

To have a world-class airport on our doorstep (which Manston is not) will mean destroying everything that would attract real tourism jobs to Thanet and for very few local opportunities. Passengers would simply be passing through and, regardless of what any inept politician may tell you, they will not be spending their money in Thanet.

Why are we not aiming high? Why are we not taking advantage of a rare window of opportunity – people taking short breaks here instead of holidays abroad? Why are we not seeking a real job provider such as Alton Towers, which provides 1,200 jobs throughout the year and another 900-plus between March and the end of September? These are real, quantifiable jobs.

If Manston was turned over to such an enterprise, it would not only bring a welcome boost and self-esteem, but small businesses would thrive on the back of it. An arts and crafts centre to complement the Turner Contemporary could nestle on the outskirts of the site. Themed cooking, painting, pottery holidays and so on are very popular, especially with older people.

Thanet could be buzzing again, an updated and upmarket version of what it once did so well. A place to take pride in. But no.

We are at the mercy of frightened, blinkered and financially inept politicians, who peddle industrialisation as the only way. We need leaders with foresight, proud of what Thanet was and can be again.

Economists believe it is more sustainable for 50 small businesses to provide 100 jobs each than to promise 5,000 jobs from just one company.

Perhaps it is time for Thanet council and KCC to learn from the past and to build on the virtues we have.

KOS media COMMENT

Age-old problem is the same for us all

OLDER members of society can be forgiven for feeling a little down in the dumps this weekend after the publication of two worrying reports.

The first, from the Folkestone-based Saga organisation, reveals that over-50s are struggling to cope with the economic downturn, are cutting back on their spending and may be further affected by planned increases in the state pension age.

The second is from the Alzheimer's Society, which warns that respite for dementia patients is being put under threat as cuts take their toll on support groups.

Add to that Kent County Council's controversial plan to sell or rebuild most of its care homes and it certainly appears to be the case that the older generation is being hit hard. But unless you're a Premiership footballer or City banker, who isn't struggling to make ends meet nowadays?

KCC debated the 2011-12 budget on Thursday and it was clear that everyone in Kent – young and old alike – will be affected in some way by the spending cuts.

Much like Saga and the Alzheimer's Society have done, there are any number of organisations capable of releasing reports showing how the people they represent will be hit.

It just goes to show that when it comes to dealing with the effects of the spending cuts, we really are all in this together.

Warrior's 'welcome' from lowlife crooks

TERRITORIAL Army veteran Major Ian Webster would not have expected any special treatment when he returned home from Afghanistan last week.

But having risked his life providing facilities for soldiers serving on the frontline, he must have wondered what he had done to deserve having his prized racing bicycles pinched from his shed.

Not that he needs telling this, but criminals don't discriminate.

Falling in for May reunion

On March 1 it will be 50 years since the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and The Buffs – the Royal East Kent Regiment – were amalgamated. These two fine regiments became the Queen's Own Buffs.

It was my privilege to be the first officer to be commissioned into this regiment on the March 3, 1961. I arrived at Shorncliffe Barracks, Folkestone, and was put in charge of 8 Platoon in C Company. A few months later the regiment was posted to Kenya for a nine-month emergency tour.

Most members of the platoon were doing National Service.

On return to Shorncliffe, I was posted away from the regiment and the other members of 8 Platoon served out their time and left for civilian careers.

It was during the 100 TA celebrations in September, 2008, while taking cover from the rain in a shop doorway in Canterbury and waiting for the parade to pass, that I found myself sharing the space with a man wearing a Queen's Own Buffs tie. We started talking and to my astonishment he turned out to be Mike Terry, my corporal from 8 Platoon, who I had not seen for nearly 50 years.

Mike and I have now traced 19 ex-members of 8 Platoon and in July, last year, had a reunion at the White Rock Inn. It was a splendid gathering with members traveling from distant parts of the county and one, Keith Foster, from California. It was nearly 50 years since we had seen each other, so you can imagine the chatter and excitement.

In May we look forward to another reunion, hopefully with more kindred spirits from the past. Tracing the remaining members has become difficult and I am asking for help from your readers. The missing members are: Corporals Ian Morton and Alan Free; Privates Snowy Austin, Pete Biggs, John Bridger, Brooker, Terry Dibley, Durrell, Alan Fox, Gittings, Mike Gosling, Nick Haselwood, Barry Payne, Charlie Scott, Phil Starling and Ted Wedlake.

If you can help, contact me on salandmick@yahoo.co.uk.

Mick Stanley, by email

Don't be quick to judge limits

The Green Party recently continued its campaign to get all Kent's 'residential' roads reduced to a 20mph limit. This is misguided and I doubt it has the claimed support. This follows an NHS report, which is at odds with Department for Transport statistics. NHS expertise does not extend to knowing how speed limits and other road conditions are the causes of the injuries.

Child casualties are bound to occur more on 30mph roads, because the majority of urban roads are 30mph. The national picture is that more people are hurt on 20mph roads. This may be due to a false sense of safety and less attention by non-drivers on those roads.

The argument for 20mph limits near schools is also a red herring. The majority of child casualties occur not near schools but elsewhere. The best way to protect children is to return to thorough road safety training from an early age.

The ABD is not against 20mph limits immediately outside schools, if there are good reasons based on accident history, but never on main roads and only during the hours needed – school start/finish times.

For the purposes of going about one's business, 20mph is just too slow – unnaturally so. Imposition of too many impractical speed limits is liable to bring about a more general disrespect, leading to disregard for all limits – including those that are sensible and needed.

The Green Party chooses to ignore an independent report commissioned by the AA that found that imposing such slow speeds brings about an increase in fuel consumption and emissions.

Their proposal would send us back 80 years to 1930 – the last time we had a blanket 20mph limit.

Preliminary figures from the DfT reveal that since 44 per cent of speed cameras were switched off, and a small increase in average speeds at those sites, there has been a 21 per cent casualty fall. So much for the 'speed kills' myth.

Ian Taylor, Association of British Drivers, Kent branch, Dover

Nothing sacred about this Act

Early in the last century nonconformists refused to pay the education rate because of the dominant position given to the Church of England by the Education Act 1902.

Some 170 people went to prison. Today, church schools are paid for by the taxes of the silent secular majority with very little opposition. In rural areas there are no alternative primary schools and no alternative employment for primary teachers.

The Education Bill now before Parliament is even more dangerous than the 1902 Act. It will allow church schools to use admissions policies to demand conformity.

It will also allow religious discrimination in the employment of teachers.

People whose taxes pay for the schools could find their children excluded if they have not been baptised or they are not church-goers. So far there has been no demand for nonconformist schools.

If church schools start to demand baptism as a condition of entry those nonconformists who do not practice infant baptism will be forced to have their own schools.

There will also be demands for secular schools.

David Burgess, Hawkhurst

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

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BIRTHS

BUDD
Alfie Jay born on 17th January 2011 to proud parents Kevin and Michelle and new brother for Remi, Jena, Charlie and Ben.

BUTLER-JONES
Rebecca and Elroy celebrate the birth of their daughter Rhea Imogen Butler-Jones on 8th February 2011 weighing 6lb 15oz.

LAMB
Rhyan Lamb and Emma White would like to announce the birth of their daughter Phoebe Emma Lamb, born on the 3rd February at 5.25am, weighing 7lb 4oz. Lots of love, we feel very blessed.

LEWIS
Mia Jane born on 31st January 2011 at 5.01pm weighing 8lb 8oz. Daughter to Ronald Lewis and Julie Kitchener. You are a miracle whom we will love and treasure forever.

MANNING
Congratulations to Mummy and Daddy on the birth of Macey Poppy on 30th January 2011 at 8.12 pm.

NETTLETON
Elizabeth Joan May born on 25th January 2011, weighing 8lb 1oz. Daughter to Kim and James in Maidstone.

OWEN
Lacey Joanne born on 4th February 2011, weighing 8lb 9.5oz. Daughter to Shaun and Clare. Sister to Jack, Charley and Macey.

PEARSON
Glenn and Sophie Pearson of Faversham celebrate the birth of their son Finnley James Pearson on 31st January 2011. Our beautiful little boy.

PENDLETON
Simon and Lucy Pendleton celebrate the birth of their son Alexander on the 3rd February 2011, weighing 7lb 12oz.

POLLARD
Phil and Mandy of Canterbury celebrate the birth of their son Benjamin on 23rd January 2011 weighing 7lb 15oz. Beautiful brother to Nathan, Abbie, Ethan and Liam.

TAYLOR
Joseph Matthew born on 28th January 2011 weighing 7lb 6oz. Son to Adele and Richard.

THAPA
Min and Selina Thapa celebrate the birth of their daughter Sara on the 1st February 2011.

WILSON
Henry and Charlene Wilson of East Peckham are delighted to announce the birth of their son Archie Jack Joe Wilson, born 9th February 2011 weighing 9lb 1oz.

WOODLAND
Preston-Leigh born on 30th January 2011, weighing 9lbs. Son to Neil and Rebecca in Broadstairs.

DEATHS

DOYLE
Frank passed away on the 14th February 2011. Enquiries to Chittendens, Folkestone, 01303 851456.

MITCHELL
Ron John Mitchell (husband to Evelyn) sadly passed away Monday 7th February 2011 after a short illness. Funeral 25th February, 2:45pm at Vinters Park, Maidstone. All welcome.

SHEPHERD
Gilbert died suddenly at home in Faversham on Sunday 6th February 2011. Reunited and in heaven with Vicky, you will be sadly missed by all of your family. We will always have our fond memories of you and you will never be forgotten. Rest In Peace. There will be a family cremation and a memorial service for Gilbert in the spring. All enquiries to his son, Andrew.

STILL
Nola "Dennis" Sydney Still died on the 12th February 2011, aged 73. Dearly loved husband to Silvana, father of Martina, grandfather of Adele, Alexander and Michael. Funeral service at 11am in St. Nicholas Church, Allington on 21st February 2011. Family flowers only, donations may be made to Dementia UK via the funeral directors, Paul Rowlands in Allington.

TWYMAN
Ivy Irene May Twyman of Ramsgate died peacefully on 9th February 2011. Funeral Service at Thanet Crematorium at 1.20 pm on 24th February 2011.

WELLS
Charles Henry "Charlie" passed away suddenly on 29th January 2011. Will be sadly missed by his family and many friends. The funeral took place at Thanet Crematorium on 10th February 2011. Donations to the P.D.S.A.

Reducing the bias

Anne Belworthy writes that David Cameron "will reduce the democratically-elected House of Commons" by cutting the number of MPs. Well let's look at her democratically-elected Commons.

In the 2005 election, nearly a third of a million Scots voted Tory, and got just one MP. The same number of Scots who voted Labour got 16 MPs.

Our voting system has been called a travesty of democracy and it is this bias the Coalition wants to put right, by making each constituency the same size, where every vote counts. In 2005 more people in England voted Tory than Labour, yet Labour got 92 more MPs. In that election, Labour's 96 overall majority should have been a Tory and Lib Dem majority of 124. A fair voting system would have saved us from five years of Blair and Brown. And we wouldn't have had the Lords packed with Blair's cronies, time-servers, failed MPs, party hacks and third-raters. These buffoons are fighting tooth and nail and intimidating this once noble chamber into maintaining a discredited system. What else would you expect from people who don't want a level playing field?

If this lady wants to complain about reducing the number of MPs, consider this: it takes 650 MPs to govern this country of 61 million. The Lower House in the USA manages to run a country of 307 million with 435 representatives. If we use the same proportion, we could reduce our MPs to 87. This would sort the dross out.

We could replace quantity with quality and save millions.

Les Shaw, Sandhurst

Ignorant replies on train proposals

I am moved to reply to two letters you published in response to my letter welcoming Kent County Council's bid to the Regional Growth Fund for improvements to transport links to Manston Airport.

It is interesting that the letters came from the Isle of Sheppey and Rainham, in Essex. Could it be that the motivation is more opposition to the Mayor of London's ideas affecting their district than any real knowledge of the Manston situation?

Mr Aird imagines I am against KCC's bid. Far from it, I welcome moves to improve journey times to London and a possible daily link to a European hub airport.

Mr Byers seeks to insult Ramsgate and its people, but only succeeds in showing his ignorance of the situation.

He should realise that the "preferred" option in the county's bid is not to build a station on the airport site, but some five miles away, at Cliffsend, and to bus passengers to the airport.

Apparently, re-routing the rail line to the airport would be prohibitively expensive. Ramsgate station is six miles from the airport and has the advantage of existing links to Thanet and East Kent towns and brown field land available for redevelopment and car-parking. Redevelopment would also bring passengers into Ramsgate Town, rather than strand them six miles from any facilities.

Should Mr Byers choose to visit Ramsgate he will find a vibrant seaside town with an important port, Royal Harbour, and the best marina on the south coast.

We have nationally recognised restaurants, the largest Victorian and Regency conservation area in the country, and a shopping centre where residents can buy their daily needs.

The Only Fools and Horses, defunct funfair and empty shops reference is to somewhere else, not Ramsgate.

Cllr David Green, Ramsgate

Keep Kent Working! It's jobs for Kent

Keep Kent Working! It's jobs for Kent 2011 Campaign

Keeping skills local is college's key aim

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

steve.knightl@kosmedia.co.uk

TRAINING providers are teaming up with Kent's business community to ensure the county's best young workers are not lost to the capital.

MidKent College is the latest organisation to back this newspaper's Keep Kent Working campaign, one of the key aims of which is to prove to newly qualified students that they do not need to move to London to further their careers.

And according to business development head Jacqui Brown, the college is playing its part by actively seeking to team up its students with businesses in the Medway and Maidstone areas.

She said: "Kent is in competition with both London and Europe, but we're told the skill set in the South East is well below what it should be.

"We hope to change this by helping young people reach a skill level that will support the local economy to the benefit of everyone in Kent.

"What we're going to do – hopefully before August – is have a recruitment shop whereby we can put students in touch with local employers as they approach the end of their courses.

"It will also be free support for the businesses and we hope they will come to us as their first port of call when looking for staff."

There are more than 3,500 apprentices working across Kent, but according to the county council there is still a shortage of employers offering places to willing young workers.

However, Mrs Brown said she thought the situation was improving.

"Traditional companies like builders and engineers have always had apprentices," she said. "But it's the so-called 'soft skill' professions like accountancy, business admin and customer service that are the difficult ones.

"But we're getting the perception changed and driving home the message that although we can train these young workers, they still need to gain competence in the workplace.

"By far the best way to get this message across is by word of mouth and that's what is supporting us well at the moment."

As part of National Apprenticeship Week last week, MidKent College held an employer event aimed at promoting apprenticeships to local small and medium-size enterprises.

It also organised two open evenings for school leavers and those already in employment to discuss how to get onto an apprenticeship.

"By bringing in apprentices, employers can gain motivated, flexible and loyal workers who come complete with updated skills in IT and so on," said Mrs Brown.

"Many businesses also report that bringing in apprentices is more cost-effective than hiring skilled staff."

MidKent College is hosting a careers fair from 10am-3pm on Wednesday, March 23. Visit www.midkent.ac.uk for more details.

LOCAL ANGLE: So-called 'soft skills' and traditional trades both have a role to play in providing Kent's future workforce

WHAT is your business doing to help Keep Kent Working?

Are you running an apprenticeship scheme to attract young workers? Are your employees being sent on training courses to aid their personal development? Or are you funding a university scholarship to help find the businessmen and women of the future?

Send your good news stories to steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk or call 01303 817136.

Melissa says 'you're hired'

FOREFRONT: Melissa Cohen at Bluewater

THE Apprentice contestant Melissa Cohen was on hand to mark Bluewater's contribution to National Apprenticeship Week.

Ms Cohen, who was fired by Lord Sugar in week four of the latest series of the BBC show, visited Kent to assist in a challenge to merchandise the shop front of the children's clothing store Pumpkin Patch. She was joined by Bluewater retail manager James Waugh, apprentice Vicky Collingwood, and Kent County Council deputy cabinet member for customer and communities, Cllr Avtar Sandhu.

Ms Cohen said: "It's essential to show any prospective employer you are willing to go above and beyond for a dream job.

"Apprenticeship schemes are the perfect opportunity to gain practical experience, which makes the candidate stand out from your average applicant."

There are more than 3,500 apprentices working across the county, including 400 who have worked or are currently employed within KCC through the Kent Success scheme.

Bluewater general manager Andrew Parkinson said: "Apprenticeships are a great way for people to begin a career in this industry. They are also invaluable to employers, creating confident, motivated and skilled individuals with a good balance of practical experience and formal qualifications."

"We strongly recommend that businesses support apprenticeships, and that people looking to build a career and gain professional qualifications visit our apprenticeship hub and roadshow to find out how they can take the first steps."

Train & Retrain

Sponsored by KENT ADULT EDUCATION

Working together as merger approaches

BROMLEY and Orpington colleges have launched a joint apprenticeship drive ahead of their planned merger later this year.

Together the colleges offer apprenticeships in more than 10 occupations, ranging from beauty therapy and dental nursing to logistics and motor engineering.

And as part of their commitment to National Apprenticeship Week held earlier this month, they are reiterating how valuable the programmes can be to individuals and their employers. Young mechanic Aaron Farron is working as an apprentice with the car dealership WJ King, which has showrooms in towns across Kent.

He said: "A lot of students who just study find that they know how to do everything by the book, but when they're faced with a problem they get stuck because they haven't had a chance to practice. Working here is great, the people are really helpful and it's fun. I'd definitely suggest doing an apprenticeship to anyone who's interested in getting into the trade.

"You get much more practice than you do as a full-time student. It's really convenient, it's local and I'm always learning."

Call 020 8295 7070 for more information or email apprenticeships@bromley.ac.uk.

Meanwhile, a public consultation to consider the merger of the colleges will end on Friday, March 4.

If all goes according to plan, the new college will open in August as the Bromley College of Further and Higher Education with Orpington and Bromley retained as campus names.

Bromley principal Sam Parrett and Orpington principal Simon Norton said in a joint statement: "Merger will allow us to better utilise our facilities and improve efficiency, ensuring we maximise resources for teaching and learning in the challenging economic and financial environment ahead."

Fuelling academic interest

PETROLHEADS at K College will build a Caterham Seven from scratch as part of their motorsports BTEC course.

Thirteen students aged 17-25 will construct the vehicle as part of their coursework for the level three diploma, which also forms part of the college's rewards programme.

Learning manager Nick Aldridge said: "In the past it has been difficult to motivate lower-level learners to complete their skills lessons in maths, English and ICT.

"This project will help encourage the students' creative writing and their maths ability. With support from Caterham, we feel this rewards scheme will prove to be a huge success for the students and the college."

Caterham, which has a parts department in Dartford, has run similar initiatives at 13 schools across the UK in the last four years.

Marketing director Andy Noble said: "Caterham has always been about experiencing the car, not just looking at them."

Inspired by sports science

A PROJECT to engage sixth-form students in sports science has earned the University of Kent a London 2012 Inspire mark.

The award is in recognition of an interactive open day held at the Medway Park complex last month, which gave A-level students from across the county access to specialist sports science equipment.

It means the university can now use the Inspired by London 2012 logo to promote its public sport engagement programmes.

"We're delighted to receive recognition from the Inspire team for our interactive sports science day," said Prof Louis Passfield, director of the Centre for Sports Studies. "The Olympics will be great for London to host but it's also important we put in place programmes that build on the enthusiasm the Games will generate to engage more people in sport."

The Medway Park complex boasts modern facilities including a sports therapy clinic, laboratory, gym and separate seminar room with full audio/visual equipment.

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If you are an east Kent employer, NHS Fit For Work can offer **free** advice and support.

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THANET COLLEGE

Apprenticeships

"Raising Aspirations, Developing Skills, Delivering Quality"

Thanet College recruits 'The Apprentice'

FIXED TERM FOR 36 WEEKS

Salary Scale: **£95 per week for 37 hours per week**

Thanet College is delighted to offer opportunities to "earn as you learn".

The Business Development Division is recruiting two Apprentices to work and train at the fantastic new Manston Business Centre alongside experienced staff.

Business Administration Apprentice

The successful applicant will offer administrative support whilst completing on the job training and the following qualifications: NVQ in Business Administration, Technical Certificate and Key Skills in Literacy and Numeracy.

Customer Service Apprentice

The successful applicant will welcome and host customers to the Business Centre whilst completing on the job training and the following qualifications: NVQ in Customer Service, Technical Certificate and Key Skills in Literacy and Numeracy.

If you have a positive approach, good organisational and communication skills and would like to be considered for either of these opportunities:

Apply now!

Closing date: **23 February 2011**

Applicants may be required to attend an Assessment Day on Wednesday 2nd March and may also be required to attend Interview on Tuesday 8th March.

For further details and to apply online please visit our website www.thanet.ac.uk and click on 'Vacancies'. Alternatively contact the HR Office, Thanet College, Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1PN or telephone our application line for an application pack on (01843) 605052

Job reference: **APR001**

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We require **full-time** and **weekend Support Staff**.

Duties will include providing support and day-to-day assistance to residents.

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Previous experience and qualifications are an advantage
Starting salary £6.48 ph plus weekend increment

To request an application form
please call Rachel on 01227 373586
weekdays between 10am and 4pm

HMT Care

Tel No: 01227 373586 **Fax No. 01227 749115**

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Essential Qualities

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Working from home 2 days per week (Thursday & Friday) 9am - 5pm
Escalation cover, evenings 5pm-9pm & every second weekend Saturday & Sunday 9am - 5pm

Take helpline calls 9am – 5pm Thursday & Friday & provide escalation (telephone support)
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RATE OF PAY
£8.50 per hour (Thursday & Friday) 9am-5pm, 1/2 hour lunch unpaid
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Escalation cover does not tie you to a specific place and is covered by mobile phone.

To request an application pack please call 01474 533990
Closing date for completed applications Wednesday 2nd March

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Car Sales Trainee

We require an assistant whose role will be to help the car sales staff in their work to sell new and used cars. This will include direct contact with customers and also varied work helping with preparation, display and advertising of cars.

Applicants must be hard working, with good attention to detail and a full clean driving licence.

The position is full time based at our showrooms in Canterbury and will include Saturday work.

Wages according to age and experience.

Closing date for application is **28th February 2011**

For an application form please contact:
Stephanie Woodcock on **reception@canterburysaab.co.uk**

Westminster Road, Vauxhall Industrial Estate, Canterbury. CT1 1YY

To advertise in this section **01303 817040**

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Closing date: 27th February 2011

STRICTLY NO AGENCIES PLEASE

Are you a qualified maintenance fitter, either apprenticeship served or City & Guilds in Mechanical Engineering with some electrical knowledge? If so we would be interested in receiving your CV.

You'll enjoy a full range of employee benefits. To apply please send your CV to HR Department, Fuji Seal Europe Ltd, Scimitar Close, Gillingham Business Park, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0RJ or alternatively you can email to shirley.webb@uk.fujiseal.com

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OFFICE MANAGER

Job Share, 16 hours weekly rising to 24. One morning a week plus afternoons. Also covering mornings for holidays and other absence.

Flexible and enthusiastic individual able to work with our current Office Manager to support our small but growing team of professional teachers covering Britain and Ireland. Requires efficiency and skill to develop the office management; sympathetic telephone manner with enquirers and energetic promotional skills with partners such as doctors, therapists, yoga teachers, business and the media.

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REQUIRES experience of Microsoft Office, Access and Outlook, plus lively practical knowledge of use of the most up to date computer program's.

APPLICATIONS WITH C.V. TO: Colin & Sue Beckley, Directors,
The Meditation Trust, 51 Station Road, Birchington, CT7 9DJ

FOR INFO PACK ABOUT TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION COURSES CALL 01843 841010

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To apply please email your CV to humanresources@scmf.co.uk or visit our website www.scmf.co.uk alternatively you can call Peta Budd or Julia Hall on 0208 308 6812/6813

Closing date: Wednesday 23rd February 2011

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Hythe Road
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SS
Or email ynez.coton@kosmedia.co.uk

Sales Manager

The Sales Manager will play a lead role in developing new business and maintaining existing relationships. The ideal candidate should be comfortable with all stages of client relationship management and should be proficient at sourcing leads, securing new revenue, delivering presentations, writing proposals, negotiating and closing.
The person we are seeking will be an energetic and enthusiastic individual with excellent sales skills,a self starter; highly motivated and will have excellent verbal and written communication ability. You will need to demonstrate a proven sales track record, preferably from within media, will have a good understanding of the benefits of printed, online and live media and knowledge of the Kent marketplace would be useful.

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You will play the key role in selling advertising across our market leading portfolio of newspapers, websites and mobile products.
Candidates may possess a track record in telephone sales, combining excellent communication skills, tenacity and the ability to build relationships.
Ultimately, we need an articulate and assured sales person with a structured and positive manner. Your might also be looking to enter media as a career within sale and this would be an excellent starting point.

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You will need to be at ease talking to the public and capable of working under your own initiative, and be of smart appearance, as you will become a representative of our award winning company.

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Kent Salary Scheme 3 points 7-11 (£14,009.00 to £15,984.00 pa)
Pro rata to £9,163.70 - £10,388.87 pa
Plus an additional allowance of £6.50 per day when used in the PD Department

A friendly and adaptable person is required to work with an identified subject area for learning support. In addition, you would provide relief cover for the PD Department in the event of absence, to proactively support students with their learning and welfare needs in order to maximise their levels of achievement and independence. You will be required to undertake moving and handling training, and it would be an advantage to have an interest in, or experience of, working with physically disabled students and a good level of numeracy and literacy (Level 2 or equivalent) is essential.

To apply please submit with your application to Kay Allen, HR Manager, a letter outlining your reasons for wanting this position, together with evidence of why you are suitable for the role, and how you have developed your skills in previous roles in readiness for this position.

Further details and application forms may be obtained from our HR Manager by email at k.allen@thamesview.kent.sch.uk or by telephoning 01474 566552 ext 8081120.

Closing Date: **21st February 2011**
Interviews: **Week Commencing 28th February 2011**

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

Appointment to this post is subject to a criminal background check via the disclosure procedure.
Thamesview School operates a non-smoking policy.

Career opportunities at MidKent College

MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone is seeking to appoint an outstanding individual in the following area:

Hourly Paid Lecturer in Business **Ref: SESS09**

Hourly rate: £21.44 - £25.22 (dependent on qualifications and experience)

We are looking to recruit a passionate individual to teach Level 2 Business Studies. The successful candidate will ideally hold a relevant Business qualification and either hold or be willing to work towards a recognised teaching qualification.

CLOSING DATE: Wednesday 23 February 2011

MidKent College and RBLI Employment Solutions are working in partnership to support disabled applicants. For assistance please contact RBLI on 0800783114 or visit their website www.rbli.co.uk

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

For an application pack and further details visit **www.midkent.ac.uk** or e mail **job.applications@midkent.ac.uk** Alternatively you may contact Human Resources on 01634 383102.

The College is committed to safeguarding children and young people therefore any offer of employment will be subject to a CRB check.

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TOWNSCAPE IMPROVEMENT OFFICER

Location: **Civic Centre, Folkestone**
Salary: **£25,620 - £30,201 plus essential car user allowance**

Shepway is a coastal district undergoing a transformation through a range of public and private sector initiatives. To complement this activity, the district is keen to ensure that the urban environment across all its towns is improved. As such, a new post has been created within the Economic Regeneration Team to tackle townscape issues.

Your role will be to develop a Townscape Improvement Strategy for the district in collaboration with partner organisations and implement it through a wide range of initiatives.

Application details on this exciting new position can be accessed via **www.shepway.gov.uk** or alternatively if you would like to discuss this post, please contact **Jeremy Whittaker, Economic Regeneration Team Leader** on **01303 853375.**

The closing date for applications is **4 March 2011**

Provisional Interview date is **18 March 2011**

Folkestone

THANET COLLEGE

RAISING ASPIRATIONS - DEVELOPING SKILLS - DELIVERING QUALITY

LECTURER IN CARPENTRY AND JOINERY

Salary scale: **£25,589-£30,205 for 37 hours per week all year**

A lecturer is required to deliver high quality education and training, to support students and trainees effectively (including individual and group tutorials), and to further develop the wood occupations curriculum.

Job reference: **LCJ001**
Closing date: **Wednesday 2nd March 2011**
Interview date: **23rd March 2011**

TROWEL TRADES TECHNICIAN

Salary scale: **£7,990-£8,896 for 18.5 hours per week all year**

The college is looking to recruit a Trowel Trades Technician to provide support and assistance to staff and students in the workshops as appropriate.

Job reference: **TTT001**
Closing date: **Wednesday 18th March 2011**

JOBS BROKER

Salary Scale: **£22,289 - £26,408 for 37 hours per week, all year**

FIXED TERM UNTIL 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

The college is looking to recruit to the above post to provide a job brokerage function for projects in the College.

Job reference: **JB001**
Closing date: **Wednesday 2nd March 2011**
Interview date: **14th March 2011**

For further details and to apply online please visit our website www.thanet.ac.uk and click on 'Vacancies'.
Alternatively contact the HR Office, Thanet College, Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1PN or telephone our application line for an application pack on (01843) 605052.

Promoting Equality Preventing Discrimination

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Marlowe Academy

Stirling way, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6NB
www.marloweacademy.co.uk

Graduate Teacher Training Programme

Starting 1st July 2011 in the following subject areas:
Mathematics, English and Science
Salary: £15,817

We offer an exciting opportunity to work in Kent's first Academy where we continue to challenge traditional approaches and to drive up standards. Our students are offered innovative and challenging learning experiences. As part of your training package you would be supported by experienced and enthusiastic staff. Candidates must have a degree in a related subject, have left university for at least a year before commencing training, and have some experience of working with children.

Interested?
Then download further information and an application form from our website or contact the Academy. We look forward to hearing from you.

The closing date is: Monday 28th February 2011

Enquiries or visits to the Academy are welcome.
Please contact Marion Wigington, HR Manager, on 01843 598550
or email marionwigington@marloweacademy.co.uk

The Marlowe Academy is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and the successful applicants will have to undertake Enhanced Disclosure via the CRB.

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JobsforKent.co.uk
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The smart way to find your next job JobsforKent.co.uk

THANET COLLEGE

RAISING ASPIRATIONS - DEVELOPING SKILLS - DELIVERING QUALITY

BUSINESS PROGRAMME MANAGER

Salary Scale: **£33,917 per annum for 37 hours per week, all year**

Located at our fantastic new Manston Business Centre we are looking to recruit a Business Programme Manager to be responsible for managing programmes within the business development division and to promote very high standards in a positive and supportive culture that aspires to be outstanding.

Closing date: **Wednesday 23rd February 2011**

For further details and to apply online please visit our website www.thanet.ac.uk and click on 'Vacancies'.

Alternatively contact the HR Office, Thanet College, Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1PN or telephone our application line for an application pack on (01843) 605052

Job reference: **BPM001**

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The Folkestone academy

SEASONAL GROUNDS PERSON

Six Months contract to commence April 2011
20 hours per week
Salary: £6.50 per hour

We are looking to appoint a Seasonal Grounds person on a six month fixed term contract to commence April 2011 based at Folkestone All Age Academy.

Duties to include grass cutting; weeding; litter picking and general grounds work. Experience of cutting machinery an advantage however full training will be given.

For further details please go to our website at www.folkestoneacademy.com or contact Marion Wigington on 01843 598550 for further details.

Closing date: Monday 2nd March 2011

The Folkestone Academy is committed to the safeguarding of children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to appropriate child protection screening including checks with previous employers and the Criminal Records Bureau. The Academy is an equal opportunities employer.

The Folkestone Academy
Academy Lane, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5FP
Tel: 01303 842400 • Email: admin@folkestoneacademy.com

DOVER GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS

BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE WORLD SCHOOL

GRADUATE TEACHER PROGRAMME APPLICATIONS INVITED

We wish to offer the following trainee placements on the Graduate Teacher Programme

Required for September 2011

History, PE and Science

We have a very successful programme of support and qualification for our GTP students which has been enhanced by the excellent links the school has with Canterbury Christchurch University.

If you are enthusiastic and hard working; if you enjoy working with young people; if you relish a challenge and feel you have the necessary skills for this post, please contact the School Office, on 01304 206117, or email sbarham@dovergramboys.kent.sch.uk, for an application pack.

Closing date for applications is **Friday 25 February 2011**
Interviews will be held on **Friday 4th March 2011**

To advertise in this section
01303 817040

THANET COLLEGE

Apprenticeships

"Raising Aspirations, Developing Skills, Delivering Quality"

Thanet College recruits 'The Apprentice'

FIXED TERM FOR 36 WEEKS

Salary Scale: **£95 per week for 37 hours per week**

Thanet College is delighted to offer opportunities to "earn as you learn".

The Business Development Division is recruiting two Apprentices to work and train at the fantastic new Manston Business Centre alongside experienced staff.

Business Administration Apprentice

The successful applicant will offer administrative support whilst completing on the job training and the following qualifications: NVQ in Business Administration, Technical Certificate and Key Skills in Literacy and Numeracy.

Customer Service Apprentice

The successful applicant will welcome and host customers to the Business Centre whilst completing on the job training and the following qualifications: NVQ in Customer Service, Technical Certificate and Key Skills in Literacy and Numeracy.

If you have a positive approach, good organisational and communication skills and would like to be considered for either of these opportunities:

Apply now!

Closing date: **23 February 2011**

Applicants may be required to attend an Assessment Day on Wednesday 2nd March and may also be required to attend Interview on Tuesday 8th March.

For further details and to apply online please visit our website www.thanet.ac.uk and click on 'Vacancies'. Alternatively contact the HR Office, Thanet College, Ramsgate Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1PN or telephone our application line for an application pack on (01843) 605052

Job reference: **APR001**

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PUBLIC NOTICES

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

THE MARRIAGE ACT 1949 AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ACT 2004

APPROVED PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

An application has been made to Kent County Council to grant an approval for the following premises to act as a venue for the solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships:-

Name of Premises: **Windyridge Guesthouse, Wraik Hill, Whitstable**

Applicant: **John Hawkins**

The application and plan of the premises may be inspected at the address below during normal office hours. Any person may give notice in writing of an objection to the grant of an approval, together with the reasons, within 21 days from the date of this newspaper. Objections should be sent to the address below.

Giles Adey
Head of Registration
1st Floor, Invicta House
Maidstone, ME14 1XX

Kent County Council

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

THE MARRIAGE ACT 1949 AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ACT 2004

APPROVED PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

An application has been made to Kent County Council to grant a renewal of an approval for the following premises to act as a venue for the solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships:-

Name of Premises: **The Crown Inn, The Street, Finglesham, Deal**

Applicant: **Mrs Helen Ovenden**

The application and plan of the premises may be inspected at the address below during normal office hours. Any person may give notice in writing of an objection to the renewal of the grant of approval, together with the reasons, within 21 days from the date of this newspaper. Objections should be sent to the address below.

Giles Adey
Head of Registration
1st Floor, Invicta House,
Maidstone, ME14 1XX

Kent County Council

To advertise in this section
01303 817040

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

THE MARRIAGE ACT 1949 AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ACT 2004

APPROVED PREMISES FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

An application has been made to Kent County Council to grant an approval for the following premises to act as a venue for the solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships:-

Name of Premises: **The Orchards, New Road, East Malling**

Applicant: **Ian Hardie**

The application and plan of the premises may be inspected at the address below during normal office hours. Any person may give notice in writing of an objection to the grant of an approval, together with the reasons, within 21 days from the date of this newspaper. Objections should be sent to the address below.

Giles Adey
Head of Registration
1st Floor, Invicta House,
Maidstone, ME14 1XX

Kent County Council

Highways – District of Swale

HEARTS DELIGHT ROAD, TUNSTALL (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is given that because of the installation of a new electrical supply, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Hearts Delight Road, Tunstall, on or after 21 February 2011 for up to 1 day or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed in the vicinity of 'The Oast'. There will be no access for through traffic between the junctions with Bredgar Road and Park Drive.

The alternative route is via Hearts Delight Road, Hearts Delight, Bannister Hill, Borden Lane, Riddles Road, Minterne Avenue, Bradley Drive, Park Drive and Tunstall Road.

(PROHIBITION OF STOPPING OUTSIDE SCHOOLS) (AMENDMENT NO. 2) ORDER 2010

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL has made the above named Order under sections 1(1), 2(1) to (3), 3(2), 4(1) and (2), 32(1), 35(1), 45, 46, 49 and 53 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The effect of the Order will introduce "School Keep Clear" zig-zag markings to prevent parking along the frontage of Iwade County Primary School in the vicinity of the pedestrian crossing on the northern side of School Lane from a point adjacent to the school/shop car park entrance for a distance of 43 metres in a westerly direction

This Order is necessary for safety reasons, and will make stopping on the "School Keep Clear" zigzag markings from Mondays to Fridays from 8.00am to 5.00am during school term times an infringement which may be dealt with by the issue of a penalty charge notice.

The Order was sealed on 14 February 2011 and will come into force 17 February 2011.

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended and a statement of the Council's reasons for making the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays Council Offices of Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent and at Kent County Council, Sessions House, Maidstone during normal opening times.

Any person wishing to question the validity of the Order or any of the provisions contained therein on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the relevant enabling Act or that any requirement of any such enabling Act or of any regulations made thereunder have not been complied with may within 6 weeks from the date on which the Order was made make application to the High Court for this purpose.

Katherine Kerswell, Group Managing Director
Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent

For further information please contact Kent Highway services on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Kent Highway Services

HIGHWAYS –District of Sevenoaks

HEVER ROAD, EDENBRIDGE - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Hever Road, Edenbridge from Phillippines Close to outside Delaware Cottages.

The Order will become effective on 21st February 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence 26th February and last 3 weeks. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: New House Farm Road, Lydens Lane, B2026 Hartfield Road and B2026 Mill Hill.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate installation of a new electricity supply.

IDE HILL ROAD, BOUGH BEECH - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Ide Hill Road, Bough Beech between B2027 Clinton Lane and Lakeside Close.

The Order will become effective on 7th March 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence last 1 week. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: B2027 Clinton Lane, Four Elms Road, Green Lane and Ide Hill Road.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate installation of a new electricity supply.

STATION ROAD, SHOREHAM - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Station Road, Shoreham 5m from the railway bridge.

The Order will become effective on 21st February 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 5 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Church Street, Shoreham, Filston Lane, Shoreham, Twitton Lane, Otford, Pilgrims Way West, Otford, Station Road, Otford and Shoreham Road, Otford.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate installation of 15m of service cable.

VARIOUS ROADS, SEVENOAKS/DARTFORD/GRAVESHAM AND TONBRIDGE AND MALLING - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Various Roads, Sevenoaks/Dartford/Gravesham/Tonbridge and Malling as noted in schedule 1.

The Order will become effective on 7th March 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; dates in schedule are anticipated dates however actual work dates will be displayed by signage on site 14 days in advance. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: as noted in the attached schedule.

Schedule 1

Sevenoaks

Road Name: **Lakeview Road, Sevenoaks**
Extent: Entire Length
Date: 10th March 2011 for 4 working days
Diversion: Lambarde Road, Betenson Avenue and Robyns Way

Road Name: **Hopgarden Lane, Sevenoaks**
Extent: Entire Length
Date: 17th March 2011 for 2 working days
Diversion: Ashgrove Road, Oak Lane and Grassy Lane

Road Name: **Gracious Lane, Sevenoaks**
Extent: Between Gracious Bridge and Hubbards Hill
Date: 18th March 2011 for 4 working days
Diversion: Oak Lane, Ashgrove Road and Weald Road

Road Name: **Honeypot Lane, Kemsing**
Extent: Entire Length
Date: 23rd March 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: Noah's Ark, St Edith's Road, High Street, Heaverham Road and Watery Lane

Road Name: **Watery Lane, Kemsing**
Extent: Between Heaverham Road and Honeypot Lane
Date: 25th March 2011 for 4 working days
Diversion: Heaverham Road, High Street, St Edith's Road, Noahs Ark and Honeypot Lane

Road Name: **Goodbury Road, West Kingsdown**
Extent: Entire Length
Date: 31st March 2011 for 2 days
Diversion: Birchin Cross Road and Clarkes Green Road

Road Name: **East Hill Road, West Kingsdown**
Extent: Between Goodbury Road and Cherry Tree Grove
Date: 1st April 2011 for 2 days

Road Name: **Beldam Haw, Halstead**
Extent: Entire Length
Date: 4th April 2011 for 2 working days

Road Name: **North Ash Road, New Ash Green**
Extent: Entire Length
Date: 6th April 2011 for 2 working days
Diversion: Ash Road and Redhill Road

Dartford

Road Name: **Hook Green Road, Southfleet**
Extent: Between Whitehill Road and Warren Road
Date: 23rd March 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: Dale Road, Station Road, Betsham Road and Highcross Road

Road Name: **Ship Lane, Sutton at Hone**
Extent: Between A225 Main Road and Church Road
Date: 24th March 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: A225 Main Road, A20 Main Road/London Road, Button Street and Wood Street

Gravesham

Road Name: **Telegraph Hill, Higham**
Extent: Between A226 Gravesend Road and Hermitage Road
Date: 18th March 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: Hermitage Road, Forge Lane and A226 Gravesend Road

Road Name: **Cerne Road, Gravesend**
Extent: Between St Francis Avenue and Cambria Crescent
Date: 21st March 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: St Francis Avenue and Cambria Crescent

Road Name: **Pickwick Gardens, Northfleet**
Extent: Between Dene Holm Road and Masefield Road
Date: 22nd March 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: Masefield Road, Painters Ash Lane and Den Holm Road

Road Name: **Cobhambury Road, Cobham**
Extent: Between The Street and Warren Road
Date: 25th March 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: The Street, Sole Street, Gold Street, Henley Street and Luddesdown Road

Road Name: **White Horse Lane, Harvel**
Extent: Between Harvel Road and Dean Lane
Date: 25th March 2011 for 2 working days
Diversion: Harvel Street, Harvel Lane and Harvel Road

Road Name: **Shorne Ifield Road, Shorne**
Extent: Between Mill Hill Lane and Thong Lane
Date: 28th March 2011 for 5 working days
Diversion: Crown Lane, Forge Lane, A226 Gravesend Road, A226 Rochester Road and Thong Lane

Road Name: **White Post Lane, Cobham**
Extent: Between Round Street and Copt Hall Road
Date: 30th March 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: Round Street and Copt Hall Road

Road Name: **Church Lane, Chalk**
Extent: Between A226 Rochester Road and Lower Higham Road
Date: 30th March 2011 for 2 working days
Diversion: Lower Higham Road, Vicarage Lane, Chalk Road and A226 Rochester Road

Road Name: **Jeskyns Road, Cobham**
Extent: Between Sole Street and Round Street
Date: 31st March 2011 for 2 working days
Diversion: Sole Street and Round Street Tonbridge and Malling

Tonbridge and Malling

Road Name: **Swanton Road, West Peckham**
Extent: Between B2016 Sevenmile Lane and Stan Lane
Date: 22nd March 2011 for 5 working days
Diversion: Stan Lane, Mereworth Road and The B2016 Sevenmile Lane

Road Name: **Court Road, Burham**
Extent: Between Bell Lane and Church Street
Date: 27th March 2011 and 3rd April
Diversion: Bell Lane, Rochester Road and Church Street

Road Name: **Roydon Hall Road, East Peckham**
Extent: Between A228 Sevenmile Lane and Park Road
Date: 30th March 2011 for 5 working days
Diversion: Park Road, Old Church Lane and A228 Sevenmile Lane

Road Name: **Roughetts Road, Addington**
Extent: Between Church Road and The Street
Date: 3rd March 2011 and 10th April 2011
Diversion: Woodgate Road, Trottiscliffe Road and A20 London Road

Road Name: **Pilgrims Way, Wrotham**
Extent: Between A20 London Road and Nepicar Lane
Date: 8th April 2011 for 3 working days
Diversion: A20 London Road and Nepicar Lane

The purpose of the Order is to facilitate carriageway pre-patching works to be undertaken by Kent Highway Services.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Tonbridge & Malling

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (BELL LANE, DITTON) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Bell Lane, Ditton on or after Monday 21st February 2011 for a period of up to 1 day or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Oak Drive, Maple Close, Laburnum Drive, New Hythe Lane, A20 London Road.

Kent Highway Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to cleanse gullies, pipe work and empty soakaways. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Sara Fletcher on 08458 247 800.

(BROADWATER ROAD, EAST MALLING) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Broadwater Road at the railway bridge on or after Sunday 13th March 2011 for a period of up to 1 day or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Well Street, Stickens Lane, Clare Lane.

Network Rail apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary for installing an access gate track side. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Robert Lupinda of Bam Nuttall Ltd on 01892 512255.

(BLACKMANS LANE, HADLOW) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Blackmans Lane outside Bourne Garth to The Poplars on or after Monday 7th March 2011 for a period of up to 2 days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via A26 Tonbridge Road/Hadlow Road, Three Elm Lane.

Kent Highway Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to install gullies and pipework to prevent flooding. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Sara Fletcher on 08458 247 800.

(NEW HYTHE LANE & KINGFISHER ROAD, LARKFIELD) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on New Hythe Lane from north side of Fire Station access to a point approximately 50m north of the pedestrian crossing on or after Sunday 27th February 2011 for a period of up to 1 day or until such works are completed. Access to Kingfisher Road will be available via Lunsford Lane only.

The alternative route is via A20 London Road, Lunsford Lane, Leybourne Way, New Hythe Lane.

Kent Highway Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary for carriageway resurfacing works. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Keith Jacobs on 08458 247 800.

(PHILPOT'S LANE, HILDENBOROUGH) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Philpot's Lane, Hildenborough on or after Monday 21st February 2011 for a period of up to 5 working days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route for westbound traffic is via Watt's Cross Road, B245 London Road, Morley's Road, Scabharbour Road, Scabharbour Lane and for eastbound traffic via Coppings Road, Compasses Road, B2027 Penshurst Road, High Street, Hildenborough Road, Rings Hill.

Kent Highway Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary for carriageway resurfacing works. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Robert Seggie on 08458 247 800.

(PIZIEN WELL ROAD, WATERINGBURY) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Pizien Well Road from Old Road to Park Road on or after Monday 7th March 2011 for a period of up to 30 days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Nettlestead Lane, Gibbs Hill, B2015 Maidstone Road/Bow Road, A26 Tonbridge Road.

Kent Highway Services and Southern Gas Networks apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary for cleansing highway drainage, completion of CCTV survey, install a new gully to prevent flooding and gas mains replacement. Should you require any further information for these works, please contact the Drainage Team on 08458 247 800 or John Adsley of SGN on 01233 714082.

(PADDLESWORTH ROAD, SNODLAND) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Paddlesworth Road from Paddlesworth Farm to St Benedict Road on or after Tuesday 22nd February 2011 for a period of up to 1 day or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Stangate Road, Snodland Road, St Benedict Road.

Kent Highway Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to cleanse gullies and pipe work. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Sara Fletcher on 08458 247 800.

(PLAXDALE GREEN ROAD, STANSTED) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Plaxdale Green Road from the junction of Labour In Vain Road for 180 metres northwards on or after Monday 21st February 2011 for a period of up to 19 days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Labour In Vain Road, Tumblefield Road, Plaxdale Green Road.

South East Water apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to install new pipe work. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is David Winterburn on 01634 276362.

(SNODLAND ROAD, BIRLING) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Snodland Road, Birling from Langold House eastwards for 50 metres on or after Monday 21st February 2011 for a period of up to 1 week or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Stangate Road, Bull Road, Birling Road, Leybourne By-Pass, Castle Way, Malling Road, Hollow Lane.

Kent Highway Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to replace a culvert to prevent flooding. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Sara Fletcher on 08458 247 800.

(VICARAGE CLOSE, AYLESFORD) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011
THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Vicarage Close on or after Monday 7th March 2011 for a period of up to 1 week or until such works are completed.

BT Openreach apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to enable duct installation. Should you require any further information for these works, the contact is Kenton Stewart on 01795 435729.

Katherine Kerswell
Group Managing Director
Kent County Council
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent

For further information, please contact Kent Highway Services, on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Kent Highway Services

Driving www.carsforkent.co.uk

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www.activevehicles.co.uk
Telephone (01227) 281818

BMW raises eyebrow with revised 1 Series

First **Drive**

by **MATT JOY**

BMW **1 Series Coupe and Convertible**

GERMAN car maker BMW has announced revisions to its 1 Series Coupe and Convertible models.

Both models differentiate themselves from previous incarnations by way of a new front bumper with redesigned fog lights and redesigned headlights with an 'eyebrow' element.

At the rear the lights have also been changed with a more detailed appearance.

The biggest change to ES, SE and Sport models is that they now come fitted with an Aero Curtain – a feature that channels the airflow around the front of the car to reduce aerodynamic drag, thereby increasing efficiency. Wheel arches are one of the main areas of aerodynamic drag and the Aero Curtain is BMW's innovative solution to reduce this inefficiency.

Derived from race technology, air is routed into two ducts in the front apron which then flows out of a narrow opening at high speed in the wheelarch. This jet of air effectively covers the side of the front wheels like a curtain and thus reduces turbulence.

As a result, CO2 emissions have been lowered throughout the range, with the 118d now rated at 118g/km, while all 2.0-litre petrol versions have CO2 emissions of 155g/km or below.

As with all BMWs, the cars also come with a raft of other EfficientDynamics measures: Auto Start-Stop is fitted to all petrol and diesel models (excluding versions with automatic transmission), while Diesel Particulate Filters, Brake Energy Regeneration, Electric Power Steering (excluding 135i), Intelligent Alternator Control and Optimum Shift Indicator for manual models are all standard throughout the range.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km). New Corsa range. Urban: 28.8 (9.8) – 67.3 (4.2), Extra-urban: 47.9 (5.9) – 91.1 (3.1), Combined: 38.7 (7.3) – 80.7 (3.5). CO2 emissions from 172 – 94g/km.

*Offer available to individuals for orders received between 01.02.11 and 31.03.11. Figures based on a non-maintenance contract hire package over 48 months and 6,000 miles per year (max). An advance rental of £1230 is payable, then 47 monthly rentals of £205. Rentals and excess charges are based on the current VAT rate. An excess charge of up to 6.38 ppm will be applied for mileage in excess of 6,000 mile p.a. Excess charges also apply if the car is not serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidelines and returned to Vauxhall Leasing in a condition commensurate with the BVRLA Fair Wear & Tear guidelines for its age and mileage. Package includes R.F.L. and Vauxhall Assistance. Price includes Swappage Allowance, metallic paint, and other models available at extra cost. The Vauxhall Swappage Scheme applies to customers trading in a qualifying car or commercial vehicle (up to 3.5 tonnes) against the purchase of selected new Vauxhall models. At the date of the new vehicle order, the vehicle traded in must be 7 years old or older from date of first registration in the UK. To qualify for the scheme, the owner of the trade vehicle (or their spouse/partner living at the same UK address) must be named as the registered keeper and resident at the UK address shown on the Vehicle Registration Document (V5C) and have owned the vehicle for a minimum of 90 days. The new vehicle must be registered at the same address. The vehicle must have a valid MOT and road tax (or that has expired no earlier than 14 days prior to the new vehicle order date) and be insured at the date of the new vehicle order. Offer subject to availability and status. UK supplied vehicles only. For full specification, details, terms and conditions contact your local WJ King dealer. Guarantee and/or indemnity may be required. Applicants must be 18 or over. Details correct at time of publication and may vary, e.g. if list price changes. Personal contract hire by ALD Automotive Ltd., trading as Vauxhall Leasing, Oakwood Park, Lodge Causeway. Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3JA. WJ King reserve the right to withdraw any offer at any time. A £99 inc. VAT admin fee (security checks and fuel) will be added to all vehicle purchases, this includes £20 worth of fuel. Telephone calls may be recorded for training purposes. E&OE.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data – Fuel Consumption Figures mpg (litres/100km): Vauxhall Range: urban 14.4 (19.6) – 67.3 (4.2), extra-urban 27.4 (10.3) – 91.1 (3.1), combined 20.6 (13.7) – 80.7 (3.5), CO2 Emissions 324 – 94g/km.

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DrivingReview

by

RICHARD M HAMMOND

Ford **Mondeo**

Mondeo getting better with age

NEW ERA: Ford is hoping its latest Mondeo will lead to a return of premium saloon drivers

MONDEO man may not have proved as pivotal in last year's General Election as he was back in 1997, but at least he can take solace in the fact that in the 13 years since, he has become better looking, more reliable and more powerful.

He may or may not be so pleased to hear that he's also become more exclusive. In the decade and a bit since New Labour entered power on a ground-swell of support from the Ford Mondeo driving everyman, the rep-segment staple has been overtaken as the vehicle of choice for motorway journey-men by the premium BMW 3 Series model, with drivers buoyed by a booming economy and an arguably more even distribution of wealth.

A couple of years on from the hardest-hitting recession of a generation all of that seems a long time ago – and now the Ford Mondeo is gunning to bring some of those premium saloon drivers back into its fold as the age of austerity hits home.

There are one or two problems, however. Firstly, the Mondeo had become rather expensive as a result of a drop in the value of sterling. Secondly, those drivers who have been enjoying the high regard, powerful performance and premium feel that a German marque affords have become somewhat accustomed to the trappings.

The responses have come two-fold. Ford has recently restructured its price plans across the existing line-up of models, offering far greater value across its range, including the Mondeo.

And now the Mondeo has been revised with the aim of offering more power, more refinement and a more premium feel.

Read any review of the previous generation Ford Mondeo and it will tell you that it offers a class-leading package. Handsome good looks, a spacious interior, a contemporary cockpit and the crisp handling that's become expected of Ford models were all present.

It's probably for the best, then, that Ford has concentrated its efforts resulting in a revised model that is at once comfortingly familiar and intriguingly different.

It's worth noting early on that the traditional four-door saloon model is no more in the UK due to lack of demand.

From the outside, the changes are subtle but apparent up close. The shared front ends are more in keeping with the hugely popular Focus and S-Max models. The upper portion of the grille is sleeker, while the lower, trapezoidal portion has been made larger.

LED running lamps are integrated into the fog-lamp units and, along the sides, more chrome around the windows of the upper trim level models highlights the sleek window line and gives a greater impression of quality.

The same affect is mostly achieved inside, with revisions to details such as the door-panel design giving a more upmarket and design-conscious feel. The centre console boasts a simple and attractive layout while the instrument binnacle is very impressive, with a clear colour display conveying information in an effortlessly absorbed manner.

The menu-based interface takes a little practice to master but is a success and even the models equipped with the new lane departure warning and speed limiter options use a minimum of buttons.

Material quality is good, with soft touch plastics to the upper portion of the dash. Only the satin-finish surround for the centre console is likely to divide opinion.

The changes go beyond cosmetics. Two new engine options include a 197bhp version of the 2.2-litre 'DuraTorq' diesel and a 237bhp, 2.0-litre 'EcoBoost' petrol. The latter is available with Ford's six-speed, twin-clutch PowerShift automatic transmission.

It's a slick combination and one that makes the most of the Mondeo's cosseting ride and responsive chassis, with seamless drive and an impressive turn of speed. Importantly, it's as smooth in town at low speed as when cruising, requiring no special treatment from the driver's seat.

Interior space remains one of the Mondeo's trump cards. It feels hugely accommodating from passenger seats and the boot is generous in five-door form. For the driver, the impression of size remains present on the road – making it a tight vehicle to position against an oncoming tractor – but it's a small price to pay for such accommodation.

Mondeo man can continue to feel on top of his game for a few more years yet.

DrivingFacts

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Official Government Environment Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km). Aveo 1.4 LT 5dr: Urban - 35.8 (7.9), Extra-urban - 60.1 (4.7), Combined - 47.9 (5.9). CO2 emissions 140g/km. Captiva 2.0 VCDi LT 5-seat: Urban - 32.1 (8.8), Extra-urban - 45.6 (6.2), Combined - 39.2 (7.2). CO2 emissions 191g/km. Cruze 1.6 S 4dr: Urban - 31.4 (9.0), Extra-urban - 51.4 (5.5), Combined - 41.5 (6.8). CO2 emissions 159g/km. Spark 1.2 LT 5dr: Urban - 42.8 (6.6), Extra-urban - 67.3 (4.2), Combined - 55.4 (5.1). CO2 emissions 119g/km.

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2009 (59) NISSAN NOTE VISIA MPV AUTO, GREY, 1800 miles ... £8,995
2009 (09) VAUXHALL AGILA DESIGN 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles ... £8,995
2010 (10) FIAT PUNTO EVO DYNAMIC DUALOGIC 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 500 miles ... £8,995
2009 (59) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 1100 miles ... £6,495

CONVERTIBLES CABRIOLETS

2009 (09) MERCEDES-BENZ CLK CLK200 KOMPRESSOR AVANTGARDE CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLACK, 20000 miles ... £23,995
2008 (08) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, GREY, 11000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (57) PEUGEOT 307 S COUPE CABRIOLET COUPE AUTO, BLACK, 15000 miles ... £9,995
2006 (56) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles ... £8,995
2006 (06) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 21000 miles ... £7,995
2005 (05) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT COUPE CABRIOLET CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 38000 miles ... £6,995

FIESTA

2010 (60) FORD FIESTA TITANIUM 3DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 2000 miles ... £11,995
2007 (57) FORD FIESTA GHIA 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 16000 miles ... £6,995

FOCUS HATCH & SALOON

2010 (59) FORD FOCUS TITANIUM 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 4000 miles ... £12,995
2009 (09) FORD FOCUS ZETEC 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 3000 miles ... £10,995
2008 (58) FORD FOCUS STYLE 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 3000 miles ... £9,995
2008 (08) FORD FOCUS ZETEC 3DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 4000 miles ... £8,995
2008 (57) FORD FOCUS STYLE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 7000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) FORD FOCUS ZETEC CLIMATE 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 19000 miles ... £6,995
2005 (55) FORD FOCUS GHIA 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 27000 miles ... £6,495
2007 (57) FORD FOCUS ZETEC CLIMATE 16V 3DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 21000 miles ... £5,995

FOCUS ESTATES

2007 (57) FORD FOCUS STYLE ESTATE AUTO, GREY, 12000 miles ... £6,495

RENAULT SCENIC

2009 (59) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE DCI FAP TURBO MPV AUTO, BLUE, 6000 miles ... £16,995
2007 (07) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 136 7STR MPV AUTO, BLUE, 8000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (07) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 136 7STR MPV AUTO, BLUE, 15000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, RED, 13000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, GREY, 10000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, GREY, 26000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 20000 miles ... £7,995
2008 (57) RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, BLUE, 19000 miles ... £6,995
2006 (56) RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 5STR MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 16000 miles ... £6,495
2004 (54) RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE 16V MPV AUTO, BLACK, 27000 miles ... £5,495

RENAULT

2007 (57) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 136 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, GOLD, 12000 miles ... £10,995
2010 (10) RENAULT GRAND MODUS DYNAMIQUE VVT 5DR HATCH AUTO, OTTOMON BLUE, 1000 miles ... £9,995
2010 (10) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1800 miles ... £9,995
2010 (60) RENAULT MODUS GRAND DYNAMIQUE VVT 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 250 miles ... £9,995
2008 (08) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, GREY, 11000 miles ... £9,995
2006 (56) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles ... £8,995
2008 (08) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 136 7STR MPV AUTO, GREEN, 15000 miles ... £8,995
2006 (06) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 21000 miles ... £7,995
2008 (58) RENAULT KANGOO AUTHENTIQUE 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 300 miles ... £7,995
2008 (58) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, GREY, 1500 miles ... £7,495
2005(05) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT COUPE CABRIOLET CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 38000 miles ... £6,995
2006 (56) RENAULT LAGUNA EXPRESSION SPORT TOURER 16V ESTATE AUTO, GREY, 8000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (57) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 10000 miles ... £6,995
2008 (08) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, GREY, 12000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (07) RENAULT CLIO EXPRESSION 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 15000 miles ... £5,995
2005 (05) RENAULT MODUS PRIVILEGE 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 39000 miles ... £4,995
2005 (05) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, GREEN, 39000 miles ... £3,995

CHEVROLET

2008 (08) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles ... £6,995
2009 (58) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX ESTATE AUTO, BLACK, 9000 miles ... £6,995
2008 (58) CHEVROLET AVEO LT 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 999 miles ... £6,995
2009 (09) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 3000 miles ... £6,995
2009 (59) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 1100 miles ... £6,495
2008 (08) CHEVROLET KALOS SX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 8000 miles ... £5,995
2008 (57) CHEVROLET KALOS SX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 18000 miles ... £5,495
2006 (56) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 15000 miles ... £4,995
2007 (57) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 2000 miles ... £4,995
2007 (07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles ... £4,495
2007 (07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 20000 miles ... £4,495
2007 (07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 18000 miles ... £4,495

HYUNDAI

2010 (10) HYUNDAI I20 COMFORT 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 800 miles ... £10,495
2007 (56) HYUNDAI COUPE SIII COUPE AUTO, RED, 4000 miles ... £8,995
2008 (58) HYUNDAI MATRIX COMFORT MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 10000 miles ... £7,495
2008 (58) HYUNDAI GETZ GSI 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles ... £6,995
2008 (08) HYUNDAI MATRIX GSI MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles ... £6,495
2007 (57) HYUNDAI MATRIX GSI SALOON AUTO, BLACK, 12000 miles ... £5,995
2006 (56) HYUNDAI GETZ CDX 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 9000 miles ... £5,995
2008 (08) HYUNDAI AMICA CDX 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 24000 miles ... £5,995
2007 (57) HYUNDAI ACCENT ATLANTIC LIMITED EDITION 3DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles ... £5,995
2008 (08) HYUNDAI AMICA CDX 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 5000 miles ... £5,995
2008 (08) HYUNDAI AMICA CDX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles ... £5,995
2007 (07) HYUNDAI MATRIX GSI MPV AUTO, BLACK, 15000 miles ... £5,495
2004 (54) HYUNDAI GETZ GSI 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles ... £3,995

KIA

2009 (09) KIA CEED GS 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (57) KIA RIO ICE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles ... £5,495

DAIHATSU

2008 (08) DAIHATSU SIRION SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 13000 miles ... £7,995
2008 (08) DAIHATSU SIRION SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 8000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) DAIHATSU SIRION SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles ... £7,495
2007 (07) DAIHATSU SIRION 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 20000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (07) DAIHATSU SIRION SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 16000 miles ... £6,995

FIAT

2010 (10) FIAT PUNTO EVO DYNAMIC DUALOGIC 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 500 miles ... £8,995
2007 (56) FIAT PANDA ELEGANZA 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 25000 miles ... £4,995

FUSION

2010 (10) FORD FUSION TITANIUM 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 1000 miles ... £10,995
2010 (10) FORD FUSION ZETEC 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 1800 miles ... £9,995
2008 (08) FORD FUSION FUSION + 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 13000 miles ... £7,995
2009 (09) FORD FUSION FUSION + 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 16000 miles ... £7,495

CITROEN

2007 (57) CITROEN C3 SX 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, DIABLO RED, 13000 miles ... £5,995

CORSA

2010 (10) VAUXHALL CORSA SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles ... £11,495
2010 (10) VAUXHALL CORSA EXCLUSIV AC 5DR HATCH AUTO, GOLD, 6000 miles ... £9,995
2010 (10) VAUXHALL CORSA SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles ... £9,995
2009 (59) VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB AC 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 750 miles ... £9,495
2009 (58) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 11000 miles ... £8,995
2009 (09) VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB AC 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, ULTRA BLUE, 4000 miles ... £8,995
2008 (58) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 12000 miles ... £8,995
2008 (58) VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB AC 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 9000 miles ... £8,495
2008 (58) VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB AC 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles ... £8,495
2008 (58) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 11000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V 3DR HATCH AUTO, GOLD, 5000 miles ... £7,495
2005 (54) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V 3DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 4000 miles ... £5,495
2003 (53) VAUXHALL CORSA ELEGANCE 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 26000 miles ... £3,995

MAZDA

2008 (58) MAZDA 3 3 TAKARA 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 5000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (57) MAZDA 3 3 TS 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 8000 miles ... £8,995
2006 (56) MAZDA 6 6 TS 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 21000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) MAZDA 2 2 CAPELLA 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 15000 miles ... £6,495
2007 (56) MAZDA 2 2 S 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 17000 miles ... £5,995

SUZUKI

2009 (09) SUZUKI GRAND VITARA X-EC ESTATE AUTO, GREY, 5000 miles ... £14,995
2009 (B) SUZUKI GRAND VITARA 16V ESTATE AUTO 4x4, BLUE, 13000 miles ... £12,995
2009 (59) SUZUKI SWIFT GLX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 450 miles ... £9,495
2009 (59) SUZUKI SWIFT GLX 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles ... £8,995

TOYOTA

2007 (57) TOYOTA PRIUS T SPIRIT VVT-I 5DR HATCH, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles ... £12,995
2007 (57) TOYOTA AURIS T SPIRIT VVT-I MM 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (07) TOYOTA COROLLA T3 VVT-I 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (07) TOYOTA AURIS T3 VVT-I MM 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 17000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (56) TOYOTA COROLLA T3 VVT-I 5DR HATCH AUTO, IXION BLUE, 13000 miles ... £7,995
2008 (08) TOYOTA YARIS T3 VVT-I 5DR HATCH AUTO, VENETIAN SILVER, 14000 miles ... £7,995
2005 (05) TOYOTA YARIS VERSO T SPIRIT VVT-I MPV AUTO, CHAMPAGNE, 9000 miles ... £7,995
2005 (54) TOYOTA YARIS VERSO T SPIRIT VVT-I MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles ... £7,495
2005 (55) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 5000 miles ... £7,495
2004 (54) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 13000 miles ... £6,995
2005 (05) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I 3DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 12000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (07) TOYOTA YARIS T3 VVT-I MM 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 21000 miles ... £6,995
2005 (55) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I 3DR HATCH AUTO, CRYSTAL SILVER, 5000 miles ... £6,995
2004(54) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 1750 miles ... £6,995
2005 (M) TOYOTA YARIS VERSO T3 VVT-I MPV AUTO, CHAMPAGNE, 25000 miles ... £6,495
2004 (04) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I 5DR HATCH AUTO, CRYSTAL SILVER, 6000 miles ... £6,295
2004 (04) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I 5DR HATCH, BLACK, 25000 miles ... £5,495

NISSAN

2010 (10) NISSAN QASHQAI TEKNA 5DR HATCH, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 10000 miles ... £19,995
2008 (58) NISSAN QASHQAI TEKNA 4WD 5DR TD HATCH AUTO 4x4, CAFFE LATTE, 11000 miles ... £19,995
2009 (59) NISSAN QASHQAI N-TEC 5DR 4WD HATCH 4x4, BLACK, 2000 miles ... £18,995
2009 (09) NISSAN QASHQAI TEKNA 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles ... £17,995
2010 (10) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 4000 miles ... £17,995
2009 (09) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 9000 miles ... £15,995
2007 (57) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA 5DR HATCH, CAFFELATTE, 19000 miles ... £12,995
2010 (60) NISSAN CUBE KAIZEN 5DR HATCH AUTO, WHITE, 1000 miles ... £12,995
2007 (07) NISSAN QASHQAI VISIA 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 24000 miles ... £10,995
2009 (59) NISSAN NOTE VISIA MPV AUTO, GREY, 1800 miles ... £8,995
2009 (59) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 7000 miles ... £8,495
2009 (59) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 8000 miles ... £8,495
2007 (57) NISSAN MICRA SPIRITA 3DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 18000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (57) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 15000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (57) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA PLUS 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 12000 miles ... £6,995
2010 (59) NISSAN PIXO N-TEC 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 3000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (57) NISSAN MICRA SPIRITA 3DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 11000 miles ... £6,495
2006 (56) NISSAN MICRA SPIRITA 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 15000 miles ... £5,995
2005 (05) NISSAN ALMERA S 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 11000 miles ... £4,995
2004 (04) NISSAN MICRA S 3DR HATCH AUTO, ARUBA BLUE, 12000 miles ... £4,495
2002 (02) NISSAN MICRA S 3DR HATCH, WHITE, 10000 miles ... £2,995

ASTRA HATCHBACKS

2010 (10) VAUXHALL ASTRA ELITE 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 950 miles ... £15,995
2010 (10) VAUXHALL ASTRA EXCLUSIV 3DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles ... £9,995
2010 (59) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 3DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles ... £9,495
2009 (59) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 3DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 5000 miles ... £9,495
2009 (09) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 14000 miles ... £8,995
2009 (58) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 8000 miles ... £8,495
2009 (59) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 2000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 19000 miles ... £6,995
2008 (58) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 11000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 5DR HATCH AUTO, TURQUOISE, 20000 miles ... £6,995
2008 (08) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 5DR HATCH AUTO, BEIGEBUFF, 14000 miles ... £6,495
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 17000 miles ... £5,995

ASTRA ESTATES

2008 (58) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 140 ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles ... £7,995
2008 (08) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 140 ESTATE AUTO, SILVER, 14000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 140 ESTATE AUTO, PANNACOTTA, 15000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 140 ESTATE AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles ... £6,995
2008 (08) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 140 ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles ... £6,995
2006 (56) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V ESTATE AUTO, PANACOTTA, 16000 miles ... £6,495
2006 (56) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V ESTATE AUTO, BLACK, 11000 miles ... £5,995

ZAFIRA MERIVA & AGILA

2009 (09) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA EXCLUSIV CDTI TD MPV AUTO, GREEN, 7000 miles ... £12,995
2010 (10) VAUXHALL MERIVA DESIGN 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles ... £10,995
2008 (08) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA DESIGN DIRECT MPV AUTO, BLUE, 850 miles ... £10,995
2008 (08) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles ... £8,995
2009 (09) VAUXHALL AGILA DESIGN 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 14000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, CHAMPAGNE, 4000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, TURQUOISE, 13000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles ... £7,995
2008 (08) VAUXHALL AGILA CLUB MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 3000 miles ... £7,495
2007 (07) VAUXHALL MERIVA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 19000 miles ... £6,995
2008 (58) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 7000 miles ... £5,995
2004 (54) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 78000 miles ... £3,995

CHRYSLER

2007 (57) CHRYSLER PT CRUISER LIMITED 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 13000 miles ... £6,995

PEUGEOT

2010 (60) PEUGEOT 308 S 5DR HATCH AUTO, ABYSS BLUE, 750 miles ... £10,995
2010 (10) PEUGEOT 308 S 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 6000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (57) PEUGEOT 307 S COUPE CABRIOLET COUPE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (57) PEUGEOT 307 S COUPE CABRIOLET COUPE AUTO, BLACK, 15000 miles ... £9,995
2008 (08) PEUGEOT 307 SW SE ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (57) PEUGEOT 207 SPORT 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 2000 miles ... £7,995
2009 (59) PEUGEOT 207 S 16V 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 6000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (57) PEUGEOT 307 S 5DR HATCH, BLACK, 18000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (57) PEUGEOT 206 LOOK 3DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 2000 miles ... £6,995
2007 (07) PEUGEOT 307 S 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 17000 miles ... £6,495
2007 (07) PEUGEOT 107 URBAN 2-TRONIC 3DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 4000 miles ... £5,495

MITSUBISHI

2007 (57) MITSUBISHI LANCER ELEGANCE ESTATE AUTO, GREY, 19000 miles ... £6,995

HONDA

2007 (07) HONDA CR-V I-VTEC ES 5DR HATCH AUTO 4x4, GREY, 24000 miles ... £17,995
2007 (07) HONDA CR-V I-VTEC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO 4x4, GREY, 15000 miles ... £15,995
2006 (06) HONDA CR-V I-VTEC SE ESTATE AUTO 4x4, BLACK, 26000 miles ... £11,995
2009 (58) HONDA JAZZ DSI SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles ... £10,995
2009 (09) HONDA JAZZ DSI SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 3000 miles ... £10,995
2008 (58) HONDA JAZZ DSI SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 9000 miles ... £10,495
2008 (07) HONDA JAZZ DSI SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, RED, 8000 miles ... £8,995
2004 (54) HONDA JAZZ DSI SE 5DR HATCH, BLUE, 18000 miles ... £6,495
2005 (54) HONDA JAZZ DSI SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 33000 miles ... £5,995
2003 (03) HONDA CIVIC SE EXECUTIVE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 49000 miles ... £4,995

MERCEDES

2009 (09) MERCEDES-BENZ CLK CLK200 KOMPRESSOR AVANTGARDE CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLACK, 20000 miles ... £23,995
2007 (57) MERCEDES-BENZ C CLASS C180K AVANTGARDE SE SALOON AUTO, CUBANITE SILVER, 23000 miles ... £13,995
2008 (58) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A170 AVANTGARDE SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 16000 miles ... £13,995
2010 (60) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A160 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, MOUNTAIN GREY, 1610 miles ... £13,995
2008 (58) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A150 CLASSIC SE LWB 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles ... £10,995
2007 (57) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A150 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (57) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A150 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 6000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (56) MERCEDES-BENZ A CLASS A150 CLASSIC SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 12000 miles ... £8,995
2002 (02) MERCEDES-BENZ SLK SLK230 KOMPRESSOR CONVERTIBLE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 38000 miles ... £7,995

VOLKSWAGEN

2008 (57) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF MATCH FSI 115 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 17000 miles ... £11,995
2007 (07) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF S 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 17000 miles ... £9,995
2006 (06) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 5000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (57) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF S 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 16000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (57) VOLKSWAGEN JETTA S TDI TD SALOON AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 19000 miles ... £9,995
2007 (57) VOLKSWAGEN POLO S (80BHP) 5DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 1400 miles ... £8,995
2008 (58) VOLKSWAGEN POLO MATCH 3DR AUTO, BLACK, 12000 miles ... £8,995
2007 (57) VOLKSWAGEN POLO S (80BHP) 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 18000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (07) VOLKSWAGEN POLO S 5DR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 13000 miles ... £7,995
2007 (07) VOLKSWAGEN POLO S 3DR HATCH AUTO, REFLEX SILVER, 16000 miles ... £7,495
2007 (07) VOLKSWAGEN POLO S 3DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 22000 miles ... £6,995
2003 (53) VOLKSWAGEN GOLF SE 5DR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 54000 miles ... £4,995

DIESEL AUTOMATICS

2008 (58) NISSAN QASHQAI TEKNA 4WD 5DR TD HATCH AUTO 4x4, CAFFE LATTE, 11000 miles ... £19,995
2009 (59) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE DCI FAP TURBO MPV AUTO, BLUE, 6000 miles ... £16,995
2009 (09) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA EXCLUSIV CDTI TD MPV AUTO, GREEN, 7000 miles ... £12,995

MORRIS'S MANUAL CARS

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02 52 Peugeot 206 1.6 Coupe Convertible, 59,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, ER, EW, CD, Leather, Alloys, Met Blue £4,295

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07 57 Seat Leon 1.9 TDi Reference 5 dr, 1 owner, 73k, FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, in met black £6,995
05 55 Vauxhall Signum 3.0 CDTi Design 5dr, 6sp, 60k, FDSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, fogs alloys, in met black £5,995
05 55 Volkswagen Golf 1.4 S 5dr, 2 owners, 58,000k, FDSH, ABS, PAS, a/c, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, in blue £5,995
03 52 Peugeot 307 2.0 XSi 3dr, 63,000 miles, FSH, a/c, ABS. PAS, e/w, auto lights, 1/2 leather, alloys, in silver £5,495
07 56 Ford Mondeo 2.0 TDCi Edge 115BHP, 1 owner, 83k, FSH, ABS, PAS, A/C, RCL, E/W, CD, Alloy, in Met Green £4,695
07 57 Ford KA 1.3 Style 3dr, 1 Owner, 37,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, CL, Immob, EW, Radio/CD, Drivers Airbag, Cloth Trim, White £3,995
02 02 Volkswagen Golf 1.4 S 5dr, 2 owners, 45,000 miles, FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, in silver £3,995
04 54 Renault Clio 1.2 Extreme 3 3dr, 54,000, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, s/roof, in black £3,695
04 54 Vauxhall Vectra 1.8 Life 5dr , 96,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, CBC, RCL, Immob, EW, EM, CD, Met Silver £3,495
04 54 Renault Clio 1.2 16V Extreme 3 3DR, 1 owner, 51,000 mls, FDSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, sunroof, CD, e/w, in silver £3,495

COMMERCIALS

08 57 Mercedes Sprinter 311 2.2 CDi LWB Box Van, 1 owner, 138,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, tail lift, in white ..... £9,995 +vat
06 06 NISSAN NAVARA 2.5 DCI OUTLAW D/C AUTO, 1 Owner, 103k, FSH, A/C, ABS, PAS, E/W, R/C/Locking, Immob, Side Steps, Roof Rails, Alloys, In Met Black ..... £9,995 +vat
08 57 MitsubishiL200 2.5 DI-D4 WORK, D/C, 1 owner,80,000L, FSH, ABS, PAS, c/locking, immob, CD, r/d lock, in white ..... £7,495 +vat
07 07 Mitsubishi L200 2.5 DI-D 4 Life Double Cab, 1 owner 63,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, CL, Immob, EW, CD, Side steps. In white ..... £7,495 +vat
07 57 Volkswagen Transporter 1.9 TDi T28 SWB 102 BHP, 1 owner, 97,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, immob, Side loading door, CD, Ply Lined, White ..... £6,995 +vat
07 57 Mercedes Vito 109 2.2 CDi Xtra Long Van, 6sp, 1 owner, 111,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, CD, ply lined, in white ..... £6,995 +vat
06 56 Mercedes Vito 109 2.2 CDi Compact SWB, 6sp, 2 Owneras, 64,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, ASR, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Twin Side Loading Drs, White ..... £6,995 +vat
07 57 Mercedes Vito 2.2 CDi 109 LWB, 3 seater, 6sp, 1 Owner, 117,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply Lined, Twin side loading drs, White ..... £6,495 +vat
07 57 Ford Transit 85 2.2D T280 SWB, 3 seater, 1 Owner, 104,000 miles, ABS, PAS, ESP, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply Lined, Side loading dr, White ..... £5,995 +vat
07 07 Ford Transit 100 2.4D T350 LWB, Semi High Roof, 3 seater, 1 owner, 117,000 miles, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply lined, CD, Side loading dr, White ..... £5,995 +vat
07 57 Ford Transit 85 2.2 TDCi T280 SWB, Semi High Roof, 3 seater, 1 owner, 103,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, Immobiliser in White ..... £5,995 +vat
07 07 Vauxhall Astra 1.9 CDTi Sportive Van, 6sp, 1 owner, 79k, FSH, A/C, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, Immob, E/W, Alloys, Met Silver ..... £5,495 +vat
08 08 VAUXHALL COMBO 1.3 CDTI 2000 CREW VAN, 5 .Seater, 1 Owner, 61k, FSH, ABS, PAS, R/C/Locking, Immob, 2x Side Loading Doors, 1/2 ply lined, In White ..... £4,995 +vat
07 07 PEUGEOT EXPERT 1.9D 815 70, 3 SEATER, 1 owner, 60,000 miles, FS, C/Locking, Immob, CD, Ply Lined in White ..... £4,995 +vat
08 57 Volkswagen Caddy 2.0 SDi 69PS, 1 Owner, 106,000 miles, ABS, PAS, ASR, RCL, Immob, CD, Ply Lined, White ..... £4,995 +vat
08 08 VAUXHALL ASTRAVAN 1.3 CDTI CLUB, 6 sp, 1 Owner, 73k, FSH, ABS, PAS, R/C/Locking, Immob, E/W, CD, In White ..... £4,695 +vat
07 07 Vauxhall Astravan 1.7 CDTi Sportive, 6sp, 110,000 miles, FSH, A/C, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, E/W, Immobiliser, Alloys, CD in White ..... £4,495 +vat
07 57 Vauxhall Combo 1.3 CDTi 1700 Van, 1 owner, 76,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, ply lined, CD, in white ..... £3,995 +vat
07 07 Vauxhall Combo 1.3 CDTi 2000 Crew Van, 1 owner, 91,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, 3 seat in rear, 1/2 ply lined, in white ..... £3,995 +vat
07 07 Vauxhall Astravan 1.3 CDTi Club, 6sp, 1 Owner, 61,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, White ..... £3,995 +vat

Volkswagen Caddy 2.0 C20 SDi Van
Air Bag, ABS, Power Steering, Remote Central Locking, Immobiliser, CD, Cloth Upholstery, Rear Wash/wipe, Height Adjustable Seat, Side Load Door, Twin Doorway

01 51 Volkswagen Golf 2.0 SE Auto est
Automatic, 83000 miles, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Alloys, Twin Air Bags

07 57 Ford Focus 1.8 TDCi Style 5dr
1 Owner, 47,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, Computer, CD, Met Blue

05 55 Volkswagen Golf 1.4 S 5dr
Hatchback, Blue, Petrol 1390cc, 5-Speed, Manual, 58000 miles

02 52 Mercedes-Benz C Class C230 Kompressor SE Coupe
Aluminium Silver, Petrol 1796cc, Automatic 94000 miles

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

THE Kent economy takes in £3.2 billion annually as a direct result of tourism, showing the county's appeal is stronger than ever.

The Visit Kent study also shows the industry supports 63,000 jobs and has grown in every area since the organisation's previous survey in 2006.

Visitors numbers rose by 8 per cent to 56.6 million, and the number of tourism jobs by 7 per cent.

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BioCity incubator offer to lure top Pfizer staff

By **SIMON ROBINSON**
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A BIOSCIENCE business centre is hoping to lure Pfizer staff away from the county.

Start-up 'incubator' BioCity Nottingham is offering entrepreneurial employees the chance to set up their own fledgling companies in the East Midlands.

To sweeten the deal, any Pfizer worker who chooses to make the move and launch a new pharmaceutical venture is being offered 12 months' free space at BioCity.

The offer comes just a week after the Government's Pfizer taskforce announced that keeping the drug firm's scientists in Kent was its main aim.

Science minister David Willetts said: "The priority must be to hold on to the highly skilled workers at Sandwich and ensure the world-class research there continues."

BioCity's chief executive, Dr Glenn Crocker, said there were a number of science-based start-up facilities looking to lure Pfizer workers away from Kent.

Attributes

"There is an enormous difference between undertaking research and development within a global pharmaceutical company and undertaking the same work as an entrepreneur, running your own business," he said.

"Entrepreneurship isn't for everyone, but for those who have the attributes and drive to create their own business, it is vital that they are supported to develop the commercial skills to thrive in this entirely new environment.

"Facilities like BioCity in Nottingham, and others across the UK, are providing these scientists with an environment in which they can find the support they need to plot a commercial path to success."

BioCity made a similar free-space offer to scientists at drug firm AstraZeneca's research facility in Charnwood, near Loughborough, which closed last year. More than 1,200 employees were affected.

START ME UP: Pfizer's skilled workforce is attracting overtures from outside the county

A BioCity spokesman said: "Just a year ago, BioCity responded to the AstraZeneca Charnwood closure plans by offering a package of support to former employees including training, advice and office or lab accommodation.

"As a direct result, several new ventures have emerged. Such immediate and practical intervention provides a model to both Government and the pharmaceutical industry looking to take some of the pain out of the recent Pfizer announcement."

But Pfizer's senior vice-president and site head at Sandwich, Dr Ruth McKernan, said she was hopeful the Government's taskforce could find a future for the R&D site and its 2,400 workers.

"Sandwich has an extremely talented workforce and excellent facilities," she said.

"Our priority is to work together to explore external partnership opportunities in an effort to preserve jobs and activity on the site."

Business secretary Vince Cable has given the Pfizer taskforce a 30-day deadline to draw up a list of viable options that could secure the future of the Sandwich site.

• A BUSINESS breakfast – Life After Pfizer – will be held in Sandwich next month.

The event will feature a series of short talks from senior figures who will advise on the business opportunities in east Kent following the announcement of the closure of the pharmaceutical giant's European research and development site.

The networking breakfast runs from 7.30am to 9.30am on Friday, March 11, and costs £12 for chamber of commerce members, £16 for non-members. To book a place, phone 01843 609289 or email manager@tekc.co.uk, The breakfast is being co-organised by the Thanet and East Kent Chamber and the Dover District Chamber of Commerce.

'Signs of stability' despite jobless rise

EMPLOYMENT minister Chris Grayling says the labour market shows signs of stabilising, despite a rise in unemployment across the UK.

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show the number of jobless in the UK rose by 44,000 to almost 2.5 million between October and December last year.

The number of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants has also risen, up 2,400 last month to 1.46 million.

Of those, 26,586 are from Kent.

Medway is home to the highest number of JSA recipients (6,508), followed by Thanet (4,284) and Swale (3,138).

Chris Grayling

Mr Grayling accepted that the figures were high but pointed to a sharp rise in the number of job vacancies as a sign of an improved economic outlook.

"It's been a difficult few months in the labour market, but things do now seem to be stabilising," he said.

"That the number of vacancies has risen to half a million across the country, the highest in two years, is particularly encouraging.

"The challenge for us now is to push ahead with our welfare reforms as quickly as possible so we start to move more people off benefits to take advantage of those vacancies."

• JSA claimants: Kent – 26,586; Ashford – 1,903; Canterbury – 2,173; Dartford – 1,921; Dover – 2,275; Gravesham – 2,416; Maidstone – 2,265; Medway – 6,508; Sevenoaks – 1,234; Shepway – 2,562; Swale – 3,138; Thanet – 4,284; Tonbridge and Malling – 1,352; Tunbridge Wells – 1,063.

Comment

IT'S difficult to place a figure on the full financial fallout of Pfizer's decision to shut its Sandwich research and development base. The pharmaceutical firm's 2,400 on-site employees are of course to be made redundant over the next 18 to 24 months.

Then there are up to 3,000 more workers who are indirectly employed by Pfizer, such as caterers, cleaners and maintenance staff, who will find themselves forced into looking elsewhere for a job.

But the financial shockwave will spread further still should a new owner, or purpose, for Pfizer's high-spec research-and-development site not be found.

With some 5,400 people facing redundancy as a result of Pfizer's departure, retail, leisure and other associated industries are certain to feel the knock-on effect.

High-street shops, restaurants, bars, cinemas, cafés, hotels, theatres and car dealerships will all suffer as the thousands affected collectively tighten their purse strings.

One aspect of the closure that has so far not been widely considered is the potential knock-on effect on the county's housing market.

It is likely that Pfizer's much-sought-after skilled employees will take advantage of a shortage of scientists by taking up positions outside the county or even country.

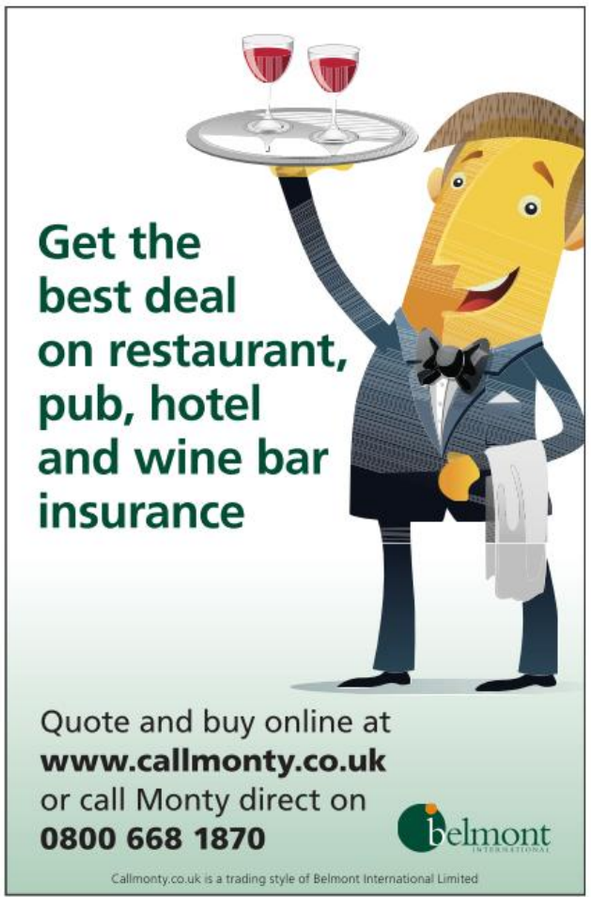
Such an exodus would leave hundreds of high-end homes vacant, sending buyer demand tumbling and perhaps house prices with them.

A lot depends upon the Sandwich economic development taskforce, set up by the Government in the hope of delivering a range of proposals for minimising the impact on the east Kent economy.

The taskforce, chaired by county council leader Paul Carter, has been given 30 days to find viable ways of keeping Pfizer's workforce in the area before it submits its findings to business secretary Vince Cable.

If the taskforce does not manage to identify a prosperous and realistic future for the huge Sandwich site, its failure could cost east Kent for years to come.

BUSINESS EDITOR, SIMON ROBINSON



Firm's relocation leads to expansion

EMPLOYMENT screening firm Jefferson Hunt is looking to expand after relocating its head office to Kent.

The company, which offers comprehensive background checks, verifying would-be employees' credit, education and employment histories, has moved from Essex to Wateringbury, near Maidstone.

Jefferson Hunt plans to increase its workforce to about 20 within the next 12 months. The firm's Angus Buchanan praised Locate in Kent for its help in assisting with the company's move into the county.

"During my three-year search for property in the county, Locate in Kent provided invaluable support and assistance and numerous lists of properties to view," he said.

"The agency is an excellent source of information and I was able to call on the company when I needed to procure local services and was given excellent contacts, including IT and telecoms companies. I can't praise Locate in Kent highly enough.

"Kent also represented a great opportunity for Jefferson Hunt, since here we have access to a large number of the type of highly experienced and highly-skilled ex-City workers we need to undertake our reports. On a personal level, I can also be in the City and in front of clients within an hour – a crucial benefit to our business."

Locate in Kent chief executive Paul Wookey said: "The business-services industry is strong in Kent and during this financial year has been one of the top sectors among projects we have assisted.

"It is important that companies such as Jefferson Hunt continue to be attracted by our message that the county's proximity to the City and its cost-effective properties make it an unrivalled business location."

JCB scoops order as hire specialist replaces the fleet

SPECIALIST hire firm H.E. Services has signed a £14 million digger deal with JCB, ***writes Simon Robinson***.

The Strood-based excavator hire company placed the huge order – equating to 350 new vehicles – at JCB Transmissions in Wrexham.

The deal was signed in the presence of Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne during his visit to the site.

H.E Services chairman Hugh Edeleanu said: "Our company's mission is to provide the best quality service and most extensive range of machines and attachments for our customers and this big investment in new JCBs is critical to delivering that promise.

"We pride ourselves on having Britain's most up-to-date fleet of machines and are committed to replacing that fleet every two or three years to ensure customers get the most efficient, powerful and high-performing products on the market."

JCB chief executive Alan Blake said: "This order follows a number of major deals secured so far this year and we are delighted that a company of H.E. Services's reputation has chosen JCB when updating its fleet.

"H.E. Services is a long-standing JCB customer so it is testament to both the quality of our machines and service back-up that we have retained this important business.

"This year has got off to a flying start. Our order books are in their healthiest position for four years and the outlook for the rest of 2011 is extremely promising."

H.E. Services is the UK's largest specialist excavator hire-company and boasts a 2,000-strong fleet of excavator machinery, offered for hire via 12 depots nationwide.

The firm, founded in 1972, employs more than 1,000 staff. Away from its hire business, the company is also known for its four Diggerland theme parks, in Strood, Devon, Durham and Yorkshire.

INFRA DIG: Chancellor George Osborne flanked by JCB chief executive Alan Blake (left) and HE Services chairman Hugh Edeleanu

Restructure threat to sports outlets

SPORTS retailer JJB has announced plans to shut up to 95 stores as it struggles to keep pace with industry rivals.

The firm, which has outlets in Dover, Canterbury, Maidstone and Hempstead Valley, Gillingham, plans to close 45 stores in the next 12 months and keep 50 on review for two years.

JJB Sport bosses are in negotiations with landlords regarding Company Voluntary Arrangements (CVA) which will enable the firm to push ahead with the cuts. The CVA will see rent for stores reduced and payments made monthly rather than quarterly.

Chairman Mike McTighe said: "The board and management team are working urgently on a fundamental restructuring plan which will significantly strengthen JJB's finances and build on the group's strengths.

"We are confident that, with the support of key stakeholders, we can complete this restructuring in the coming weeks."

JJB employs 6,300 staff in more than 250 stores nationwide.

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TURBINE manufacturer Vestas saw profits rise 25 per cent in the past year, thanks largely to the Thanet offshore windfarm. The Danish group provided parts for the Kent windfarm – the largest offshore windfarm yet built – which was hooked up to the national grid in September, last year.

Net profit rose from £125 million in 2009 to £156m in 2010. UK equipment deliveries during this period soared to 530 megawatts (MW), a leap from 120MW on the previous year. The Thanet windfarm accounted for 300MW of these extra shipments. The 100 Kent turbines, in eight lines, can generate enough energy to power 200,000 homes.

MORE than 825 million loose bananas will pass through George Hammond's Port of Dover base this year. The fresh-produce firm hit the huge sum – enough to stretch almost halfway round the world – after securing a new service with Seatrade, which will import the fruit from Ecuador.

MD James Ryeland said of the deal: "This is great news. We've seen steady growth over the past year and 2011 is already looking positive with the addition of this new service.

"The Port of Dover have been supportive and offered us operational flexibility, which means we can welcome these new ships and concentrate on securing new business."

George Hammond will also see 10 million melons and pineapples pass through on the way to supermarkets across the UK before the year is out.

ALMOST four out of five businesses in the region have admitted they break the law by failing to have a minimum number of trained first-aiders.

A survey by St John Ambulance revealed that 79 per cent of South East businesses fell short of office health-and-safety regulations. St John Ambulance has launched an online survey to help determine whether firms are meeting statutory first-aid requirements. The organisation will then provide advice and training, as necessary. To complete the survey, visit sja.org.uk/survey.

LUXURY-homes developer Green Amber has picked up an industry award. The Westerham-based company took first prize at the Premier Guarantee Excellence Awards in the single-unit development-of-the-year category. The firm earned the award with a high-spec seven-bedroom family home.

George Micallef of Green Amber said: "We're thrilled to have won – recognition from our peers is an honour. We are proud of all of our developments and designs and work hard to ensure none of our properties is ever the same. Each house is unique, from concept to completion."

The Premier Guarantee Excellence Awards are in their fourth year and recognise the best of the UK housing market.

FIRST-TIME buyers have nominated an Ashford residential block for an industry magazine's annual awards.

The Latitude Walk complex has been shortlisted in the First Time Buyer Readers' Awards best-small-development category. Developer Moat has also been nominated for most imaginative marketing campaign (Bridge House, Croydon) and best website. Moat's director of sales and marketing, Marilyn DiCara, said: "To be shortlisted in one category would have been great, but three is amazing.

"Winning one of these awards would be the icing on the cake because they are voted for by the people we aim to reach with our services."

Punching above our weight with tourism

By **SIMON ROBINSON**

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TOURISM contributes £3.2 billion to the Kent economy and supports 63,000 jobs, new research has revealed.

An independent study based on statistics gathered from 2009 shows the industry has boomed since the last review was conducted in 2006.

The number of visitors to the county rose by 8 per cent to 56.6 million. They spent almost £2.6 billion, up 9 per cent on 2006.

A further £176.2 million was spent in the county by visitors on their second homes and boats, and by friends and relatives entertaining guests – a 25 per cent increase.

Demand

The number of jobs created in tourism rose with increased demand, up 7 per cent in the three-year period.

The study was commissioned by Visit Kent. Chief executive Sandra Matthews-Marsh said: "These tremendous results really demonstrate that Kent and Medway is increasingly recognised as a top UK destination both at home and abroad.

"Visit Kent is a not-for-profit organisation bringing together local authorities and our 3,000 tourism, leisure and hospitality businesses to market our county in a way that no individual business or organisation could do on its own. Together we are punching far above our weight.

"Our innovative partnerships, which are developing all the time, are adding so much value to our campaigns and our marketing reach.

"I am confident that when the next survey is done, based on data collected in 2012, the results will be even more impressive."

The study also revealed there were 4.3 million domestic overnight trips to Kent in 2009, with Medway, Canterbury and Thanet providing the most popular destinations.

Expenditure associated with domestic overnight trips was £567m, with an average spend per person of £46.78 per night and £131.49 per trip.

The 810,000 overnight trips to Kent by overseas visitors was an increase of 3 per cent on 2006, with Canterbury and Ashford being the biggest draws. Overseas visitors spent a total of £263.3m – 9 per cent more than in 2006.

All parts of the county enjoyed an increase in the number of day trips made to and within the county in 2009, which totalled at 51.57 million – an 8 per cent increase in volume overall compared with 2006.

Assets

The day-trippers were also spending more – at £1.76bn, a 9 per cent increase.

KCC's economic development chief Kevin Lynes said: "Tourism has made a massive difference to many businesses and to local people and it is clearly an important growth sector for Kent.

"It is the only sector that allows us to build growth without laying bricks, but by using our natural assets.

"So these are excellent results and we are committed to developing our tourism, leisure and hospitality economy even further and positioning Kent as a top UK destination."

FACT FILE

Kent tourism survey

- 56.6 million visitors – up 8 per cent
- They spent £2.6 billion – up 9 per cent
- 51.5 million day-trippers – up 8 per cent
- They spent £1.76 billion – up 9 per cent
- UK residents made 4.3 million domestic overnight trips to Kent.
- Associated expenditure reached £567m, with the average spend per person of £131.49 per trip

Airport's expansion inquiry under way

AN INQUIRY into the £25 million Lydd arport expansion plans began on Tuesday.

Officials will look at a range of issues in the next 13 weeks, including noise, ecology, nuclear safety and the socio-economic implications.

Airport bosses say the proposals will give the area a much-needed economic lift, creating hundreds of jobs and bringing tourists – and revenue – to south-east Kent.

Opponents argue that any expansion would have a devastating knock-on effect on wildlife and coastal wetlands.

Writing on the Business for Kent website, the Friends of the North Kent Marshes said: "We are passionate about protecting our natural heritage here in north Kent and the same goes for the precious habitats down on the south coast. We truly believe that there should be no further expansion at Lydd airport.

"As Kent residents we feel that we should be looking to make the most of these wonderful natural assets which bring long-term sustainable benefits and opportunities to the area for jobs in green tourism and habitat management.

"The area's unique habitats and wildlife are protected under national and international law and it would be totally wrong to put them at risk through the inappropriate development of a large airport."

A final decision on the application is not expected until the end of the year at the earliest.

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We must not fail next generation

by Belinda Phipps, NCT chief executive

IT IS DIFFICULT to pick up a newspaper or log on to a news website without being bombarded with speculation and opinions about the economic situation.

One week the headlines are announcing fears of a double-dip recession, the next Labour leader Ed Miliband is saying that spending cuts "risk betraying a generation of young people".

In the last Budget, Chancellor George Osborne announced cuts and reductions to grants and benefits, the effects of which are now starting to be felt.

NCT, the UK's largest charity for parents, is concerned these measures will hit us where it hurts the most – the future generation.

An average couple with two children and one on the way, and a household income of £24,000, could already be seeing themselves close to £1,000 down, with further cuts on the way later this year.

Health In Pregnancy Grant was abolished from January 1 (£190 gone), the Sure Start Maternity Grant was restricted to only the first-born child from April (£500 gone), and the Child Trust Fund was abolished, with Government contributions ceasing from January (£250 gone).

Struggle

Other measures being introduced that will affect families include the freezing of child benefit from April until 2013, and scrapping them altogether for households where either mum or dad is a higher-rate taxpayer – a move affecting 1.5 million families.

On top of this, VAT has risen to 20 per cent and National Insurance is set to rise to a basic rate of 12 per cent in April. The average price of a basket of groceries has risen from £67.49 a year ago to £70.49. NCT wants new families to be free from being pulled apart by the struggle to meet their financial needs and feel able to meet the needs of their baby.

We need to help those who are planning to raise a family in these difficult times of public-expenditure cuts. NCT knows that having a baby can be expensive: clothes, toys, equipment, food and nappies all cost money that parents have to find from somewhere. There are many ways NCT is already helping families in your community.

Our nearly-new sales are a lifeline for cash-strapped families, providing an alternative to forking out for new baby products and an opportunity for parents to make money from selling clothes and equipment they no longer need. Last year, more than 200,000 parents attended an NCT nearly-new sale.

From a dinosaur

KOSmedia BUSINESS WEEK

THE BIG INTERVIEW

Fossil collector Terence Collingwood, right, turned his hobby into a business in 2002 as a means of his ensuring he could continue to add to his collection. After his online enterprise took off, he launched the I Dig Dinos e-shop three years later and opened a store in Rochester the following year. His company is the UK's sole dinosaur shop supplying a range of fossils in the UK. He spoke to Business Week editor SIMON ROBINSON.

DINOSAURS roamed the earth 220 million years ago. They flourished over the next 155 million years, evolving and spreading across the globe before eventually dying out 65 million years ago.

There followed 63 million years of relative stability. Early man eventually arrived on the scene two million years ago and picked up where the dinosaurs left off – evolving and multiplying.

Skip forward ever so slightly to just 41 years ago and fossil enthusiast Terence Collingwood came into existence.

He turned his passion for dinosaurs and fossils into a full-time business – I Dig Dinos – five years ago.

Speaking at his Rochester shop, a fossil-fanatics paradise, Collingwood explained how his hobby slowly became his job.

"I was always fascinated with dinosaurs and fossils but, having no background in paleontology, was unaware that you could own your own.

"I assumed, like most people, that all the best fossils ended up in museums. The last decade has been a real eye-opener for me as I've found out just how rich our fossil deposits are and how affordable they can be."

CAUGHT IN TIME: Fossilised fish for sale

Armed with this information, Terence began collecting fossils from across the globe.

It was when this collection began to take over his home that he started selling some items online.

Having established a network of buyers and needing a physical presence to display and store stock, the I Dig Dinos shop was opened in 2006.

It was at this time that Collingwood gave up working full-time in IT to commit to fossils, a decision he found easy.

"I committed to the business just before the recession hit. Back then I was doing more trade in fossils and dinosaurs part-time than I'm currently doing full-time, unfortunately.

"So it was an easy decision to give up work I didn't particularly enjoy to import and sell fossils."

Business was booming, especially overseas, which originally accounted for 60 per cent of revenue. The success was based on a lack of competition.

Collingwood 's business is one of just six dinosaur shops in the country and the sole provider of a range of fossils in the UK.

He said: "One of the good and bad things about what I do is that there is no real money to be made – I do it largely for the love of it."

Collingwood buys items from the US, including the dinosaur fossil mecca of the Hell Creek Formation, which is around the size of the UK. The fossil fan also buys items face-to-face at an annual industry show in France.

Although he has the pick of the market, from £4 dinosaur teeth up to high-end rare collectors' items, Collingwood said his business model was clear from the outset.

He said: "The original remit was to supply affordable fossils. I wanted the business to be exactly what I would have wanted when I was younger. Most of the fossils on offer are £10 or under. I sell some pieces from my personal collection and have some specialist pieces, but the majority of my stock is affordable."

The shop now accounts for 85 per cent of Collingwood 's total revenue, thanks largely to its location in the visitor-rich heart of historic Rochester high street. The stock has

TERENCE COLLINGWOOD'S CV

- 1987 - left school educated to A-level in maths
- 1992 - started work at Thamesport, originally as a data-inputter but then in programming and IT support
- 2001 - started buying fossils "when I found out Ebay had some"
- 2002 - started selling spare fossils to support buying more fossils
- 2005 - started I Dig Dinos to sell professionally from home
- 2006 - left Thamesport and opened first shop in Strood
- 2007 - moved to bigger premises in Rochester
- 2010 - moved to current shop

hobby to roaring trade

ROCK SOLID: Terence Collingwood with stock at I Dig Dinos, the location of which has 'seen him pull through'

EVOLVING: Collingwood has branched out into crystals and soft toys

WELCOME: The I Dig Dinos fossil shop in Rochester high street

diversified into crystals, toys, jewellery and fluffy dinosaurs, a move that has seen the scope of I Dig Dinos customers expand.

Collingwood said: "I cater for everyone. My youngest customers are probably three to four years old.

"Their parents buy the toys, but hopefully that will spark a passion for dinosaurs they will want to continue when they're older and move into collecting fossils.

"We also deal with industry professionals. I send bugs captured in amber to a professor in Austria.

"And just last week I had representatives from The National History Museum here buying supplies for their outreach work as they're not allowed to use items from their own collection. I appeal to everyone."

As for the future, Collingwood says he has no plans to expand.

"I enjoy fossils and have no plans to move into the world of franchisees. My internet presence may increase, but there's a limit to what you can do.

"The recession has hit me, and the last four years have been a struggle, but the location of my shop has seen us pull though.

"I can see the business carrying on with this location and as long as I can carry on then I'm happy."

TERENCE'S TOP TIPS

- Know your product
- Don't overstretch financially – you never know when a recession will hit
- Put in the time and effort – especially if self-employed
- Be prepared to diversify when required
- Get support from professional organisations
- Enjoy your work
- Always appear professional
- Utilise the internet
- Check competition and do market research
- Be competitive or offer a little extra

Firms await impact of budget cuts knock-on

COUNCIL cutbacks of more than £115 million will have a huge impact on Kent's businesses, according to authority finance chiefs, ***writes Simon Robinson***.

Severe Government spending cuts have left Kent County Council with a £95 million funding black hole, while the unitary Medway authority has a £23.5m shortfall.

While both councils have promised they will not counter the funding restrictions with council-tax rises, a move welcomed by recession-hit residents, Kent business looks set to fare much worse.

Efficiency

KCC leader Paul Carter said the authority would have to become a "leaner organisation", while Medway Council moneymen spoke of enforcing "efficiency measures".

About 1,700 posts will be lost across both authorities – leaving those who cannot be redeployed internally facing redundancy – while council deals with Kent contractors are sure to be reined in.

This all contributes to a bleak outlook for firms across the county.

Medway Council's finance boss and deputy leader Alan Jarrett said: "You're right to identify the problem. Unfortunately, there's not much we can do. The main thing we have to do is try to maintain spending on frontline services.

POSITIVE: KCC's John Simmonds

SHORTFALL: Alan Jarrett of Medway

If people do not have money, that's another matter.

"What we've done in Medway is all we could have done. Other councils have done worse with more money. We've done well given the circumstances.

"We've tried to minimise the impact of the knock-on effects the budget cut will have. In particular we've looked carefully at the 154 posts that will be gradually lost at the council. Where possible, workers will be redeployed."

KCC'S cabinet member for finance, John Simmonds, said while their most recent budget was the most difficult it had ever faced, there were positive aspects.

"We have retained a capital spending programme of £772 million over three years," he said.

"This is less than we have been spending, but is still a considerable sum.

"Of course, some of this money will go to Kentish firms.

"During a three-year period, 1,500 posts will go but this is not new to us.

"We currently have 900 vacancies, and while I'm not pretending that these will marry up completely, it does give us room to redeploy a lot of affected workers.

Cllr Jarrett said he still felt strongly about the "unprecedented" 11.9 per cent funding cut. "I don't feel any different," he said.

"We had an unfair formula grant settlement under Labour and the new Government has carried on that system.

"In fact, the tinkering they have done has seen the South East receive less funding than the rest of the country, which has only exacerbated the problem."

Sign up to fair play and reap the rewards

VISIT KENT is urging leisure and tourism firms to sign up to Fair Pricing and Fair Practice charters.

The county tourism champion hopes the pledges will reassure visitors that Kent businesses are committed to fair and reasonable trading and professional service.

The charters were launched in readiness for an influx of sports-mad visitors to The Open golf tournament in Sandwich this July and the London Olympic Games in 2012.

Visit Kent chief executive Sandra Matthews-Marsh said: This is an opportunity for Kent's 3,000 businesses in the sector to gain recognition and establish their credentials.

"Visit Kent is determined to lead the way in gaining recognition for our county as a leading destination and ensuring a legacy which will add value long after the Olympic baton has been passed on.

Fantastic

"This will send a message to travel-trade businesses and visitors that we take our businesses seriously and are committed to fair trading and high standards."

KCC's community services boss Mike Hill said: "The Open is a fantastic opportunity for businesses and this initiative will help them showcase their commitment to quality.

"We want visitors to experience the best that Kent has to offer so they not only enjoy their stay this time but continue to come back."

Businesses signing up to the charters will be entitled to display Fair Pricing and Fair Practice marks on publicity material. The Bell Hotel in Sandwich, Ashford International Hotel and the University of Kent have already signed up.

unique business solutions

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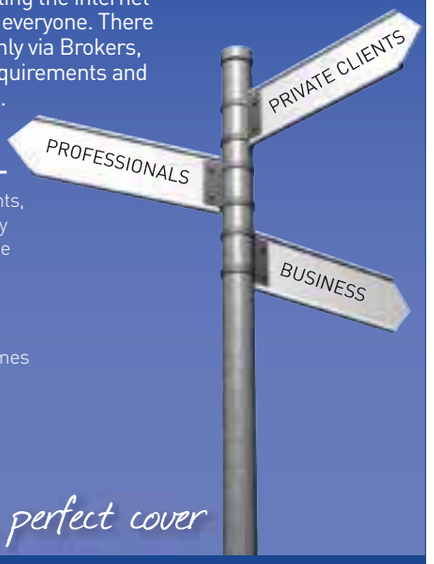

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Keeping cool is the solution

INSTALLATION experts Kent Office Solutions worked through the sub-zero snowstorms to meet a college deadline.

The Canterbury-based supply firm was employed to fully kit out a new Manston Business Park plot.

Clients Training Solutions – Thanet College's Business Training Centre took on Kent Office Solutions to furnish the college's reception, break-out areas and training rooms on the ground floor and a mixture of workstations, hot-desking, meeting areas and archive storage to the first floor.

Initial meetings were held in early October last year, when only the outer structure of the training centre was in place.

COMFORT ZONE: Training rooms, kitchen and other areas at the Manston Business Park facility were installed by Kent Office Solutions

Versatile

During the next few weeks, plans were exchanged by email to provide a definitive layout of the premises, helping other contractors to site M&E services correctly.

Products were then selected for each of the working areas based on cost-effectiveness and versatility.

The training rooms were to be equipped with a mixture of bench-desking for IT training, meeting tables and smaller tables capable of being moved for exam purposes.

The reception was designed to match the finish of all other furniture supplied, together with brushed aluminium to match the beautifully designed staircase.

Bench-desking for field workers was specified, together with desktop power and data modules to facilitate the use of laptops.

Bespoke mobile pedestals with handles were designed for the field workers, together with housing units based in the archive room for storage when not in use. The space above these units was filled with bespoke additional lateral filing units to ensure no space was wasted.

The project was finished on time despite large parts of the county's roads grinding to a halt under thick blankets of snow and ice.

Kent Office Solutions saw the final delivery of products on the target day and finished the job despite the need to work around other contractors who were putting finishing touches to their installations.

Their efforts on Training Solutions – Thanet College's new facilities were praised by director of business development Karen Evans.

"We selected Kent Office Solutions to work with as they gave us the confidence at the outset they could meet all our requirements and expectations, including delivery within a short lead time," she said.

"We wanted to deal with a local company and were pleasantly surprised that Kent Office Solutions had the capabilities to handle a significant project effortlessly.

"From taking the initial brief, right the way through to installation, they understood what we were trying to achieve.

"They came up with stunning designs and innovative solutions, especially the mobile storage and housing units, which are now known affectionately to us as puppies and kennels.

"Despite continual reassurance from Kent Office Solutions, the greatest surprise came when delivery and installation were carried out on the promised day despite the huge amount of snow we had all suffered over the previous couple of weeks. The excellent service did not finish with installation. As with all these things, there were snags. In one of the training rooms it was discovered some structural pillars protruded in the room, which was not shown on the original plan.

"Without fuss or additional cost to Thanet College, Kent Office Solutions went back to the drawing board and came up with a solution to modify the bench desks to fit the new slightly smaller wall space without compromising working area.

"Full marks to Adrian Ponting and his team for a truly professionally managed project."

Kent Office Solutions has recently been appointed dealers for Herman Miller, manufacturers of the Aeron chair.

Kent counters report's downbeat forecast with cautious optimism

THE recent upturn in the commercial property market is likely to prove unsustainable, according to a new study.

The bleak forecast was made by consultancy Ernst & Young, which said December's 3 per cent price rise may not immediately lead to a long-term recovery.

Although the spike was the sharpest monthly increase in more than two decades, real-estate head Dean Hodcroft said this only indicated that investors were calling the bottom of the market.

He said: "Welcome though the bounce of activity has been, its sustainability is far from certain.

"The upturn has largely been based on investors deciding the bottom of the market had been reached, and the massive decline in prices over the past couple of years resulting in attractive opportunities."

The fragility of the banking sector is also thought to remain a major threat to recovery.

Ernst & Young's research found that banks are still highly vulnerable to defaults by property companies, and with vacancy rates still on the rise, and rents still falling, such defaults look set to increase.

Andrew Goodwin, the senior economic adviser to the group, said: "With demand likely to remain weak across all market segments as the UK economy stutters out of recession and the possibility of the banks' leniency and support for property companies waning, the most significant risks are all on the downside.

"It is difficult to see how the level of recent activity can be sustained."

The only bright spots of the research were linked to the weakness of the pound and London's position as a strong international market.

KENT'S RESPONSE: From a commercial property perspective, this year could best be described as one of 'cautious optimism'.

Having just returned from the UK Science Park Association national conference, it is clear Kent Science Park is performing well in terms of attracting and retaining knowledge-based businesses. We are receiving a healthy level of property inquiries, the challenge is converting them into new arrivals and employment opportunities for residents.

A number of our tenants are growing and demanding extra space, which reinforces our long-term confidence in the park. We are continuing to invest significant sums in our on-site infrastructure and facilities, as well as highlighting the need for a new road linking the park to the M2 via a new junction.

Investment in road infrastructure would underpin not only the park's ability to attract new businesses and jobs, but also the wider regeneration of Sittingbourne and Swale.

With more than 45 per cent of the 1,190 workers at the park living within three miles of the gate, the park's ongoing success means employment growth for Swale and all that that means for the local economy.

JAMES SPECK, director, Kent Science Park

• The Ernst & Young report gives a national perspective of the commercial property market – and the annual Kent Property Market Report shows that Kent does not tend to experience the same peaks and troughs in property rents and costs.

Based on available properties on our database, both office and industrial supply has increased since last year, as has demand for offices from our active projects, while demand for industrial space has remained the same.

We have also seen the average space required for both office and industrial properties reduce this year.

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NEXT WEEK: Business Week Spotlight on training and courses

Mel's title ambition

Canterbury stalwart and ex-Olympian Clewlow targets maiden hockey Premier Division triumph

By DAVID PRITCHARD

FORMER Great Britain hockey star Mel Clewlow says winning the Premier Division title would be a major highlight in her career as Canterbury ladies edge closer to a maiden championship triumph.

The Polo Farm outfit finished fifth last season, 30 points behind champions Leicester, but have transformed into a genuine force in this campaign. They have already won more games than in the whole of last season and spent the winter break top of the table.

The season resumed last weekend with a win and a draw from back-to-back away games at University of Birmingham and Slough respectively.

With rivals Leicester unexpectedly losing at home, Canterbury went into this weekend's home game with Bowdon Hightown second and with a game in hand.

While the club is an established name in the ladies top flight, they have rarely threatened to challenge for the title. While Clewlow admits the side's form has been a surprise, the former international felt the squad was always good enough to figure in the championship race.

She said: "You would always put Leicester and Reading at the top because of the number of internationals they have; but with the Commonwealth Games coming when it did, we knew if we had a good start and were there or thereabouts, we would stand a good chance when our players came back from Delhi.

"On paper we have a very strong squad with almost everyone having international experience. I don't think we have played to our potential in previous years – there has always been the feeling we could do something like this."

The 34-year-old had a long and successful international career with England and Great Britain, playing at two Olympic Games. The silverware has not been as forthcoming in domestic competitions in a career spent entirely at Canterbury, so winning the league would rank very highly.

Clewlow said: "From a club perspective it would be the highlight for me alongside winning the HA Cup [in 2005]. It was always a goal of mine to play at the Olympics and at a club level to win the Premier League.

"The hope is it's not a one-season wonder and we are there or thereabouts for the next two or three. Once that happens you start attracting better players, the local ones might stay around here for university and you build for the future."

Picture: ADY KERRY

OPPORTUNITY: Mel Clewlow (left) says Canterbury have a great chance of winning the title

Top rugby league honour for Dragons coach

A KENT coach's tireless work of promoting rugby league over the past two decades has been formally recognised by the sport's governing body in the UK.

Martin Coyd was inducted into the Rugby Football League's [RFL] Roll of Honour earlier this month. The accolade is the highest honour in the sport, recognising individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the sport.

Coyd stood out for the RFL because of two separate contributions. First he played a key role in getting the Army to officially recognise rugby league as a sport in 1994, going on to set up the Combined Services Rugby League.

The second was for his part in setting up Medway Dragons in 2007, which has gone on to become hugely successful in an area with little history of rugby league. As head coach Coyd has helped build the thriving junior club, which will have a senior team for the first time this season.

Only 20 people have been inducted since the Roll of Honour was established in 2003. It is usually reserved for influential figures late in their life, but 46-year-old Coyd is the youngest ever to receive the award.

The modest coach, who made his international debut last year when selected for Great Britain against Australia in a Masters RL Test Match, was shocked by the award and felt the credit should be distributed widely.

"These people are legends of the game and to have my name go alongside them hasn't really sunk in yet," he said.

"There is a huge list of people in the armed forces, Medway Dragons and across the London and the south rugby league community who this award is really meant for. I would like to thank all of those people who have been part of it, especially my wife and family."

Picture: MEDWAY DRAGONS

CONTRIBUTION: Martin Coyd (above right) being inducted into the Rugby League Roll of Honour for his part in helping Medway Dragons build into a thriving junior club

Kent sport stars have their say on twitter

The pick of this week's tweets from the county's sports stars

THE school run is normally something to dread, what with all the screaming children and badly parked 4x4s. So imagine our surprise at Kent's former Pakistan all-rounder Azhar Mahmood's tweet this week, which leaves us in no doubt about the congestion in downtown Dhaka.

@AzharMahmood11: "Glad to be back in the UK dropped the little one to school in rush hour with no traffic as compared to Bangladesh! Nice to c clear roads!"

LOVE was in the air on Monday for Valentine's Day, although Gillingham defender Matt Lawrence was taking a slightly unorthodox approach to the occasion. For Mrs Lawrence's sake we hope he was joking.

@mattyjlawrence: "Definitely going to wait until tomorrow to buy a Valentine's Day card and flowers. Be so much cheaper. Old romantic at heart!!"

IT'S not just Premier League footballers who have their every move catalogued online. Even Gills' Danny Spiller can't go out for a bite to eat without it being reported in oddly specific detail.

@Gills365: "EXCLUSIVE! Danny Spiller was spotted in Pizza Express Maidstone this lunchtime eating a large 'American Hot', on a Romana base."

ENGLAND'S flying start in the Six Nations had former skipper Martin Corry waxing lyrical about Martin Johnson's side.

The former Tunbridge Wells schoolboy also displayed Mystic Meg level foresight by correctly predicting last weekend's three winners.

@Martin_Corry: "Anyone still knocking my predictions? Still lost money on the margin of England's win. V.Impressive game for England."

Follow us at
www.twitter.com/kentsport
for the latest sports news from around the county

COUNTDOWN TO THE OPEN

144 DAYS UNTIL THE OPEN – BEN CURTIS' SCORE AT THE HALFWAY STAGE OF THE 2003 OPEN AT ROYAL ST GEORGE'S. BACK-TO-BACK ROUNDS OF 72 PUT THE AMERICAN IN A SHARE OF FOURTH PLACE, THREE SHOTS OFF THE LEAD BEFORE RALLYING TO LIFT THE TITLE AT THE WEEKEND.

HOPEFUL: Miles Tunnicliff, a multiple winner on tour, is hoping to qualify for Royal St George's next week

Asia holds Open qualifier

IT IS less than five months until Royal St George's hosts The Open Championship and four coveted places are up for grabs next week.

After events in Australasia and Africa last month, it is the turn of Asia to hold its International Final Qualifying.

Thailand will stage the tournament for the first time, with 77 players assembling at Amata Spring Country Club in Bangkok on Thursday. They will all be battling to finish in the top four after 36 holes, which will earn them the right to tee up alongside Lee Westwood and Tiger Woods at Sandwich in July.

The field includes England's Miles Tunnicliff, a multiple winner on the European Tour, who is looking to make his second Open appearance after playing at Royal Troon in 2004.

At number 67 in the world Tetsuji Hiratsuka, from Japan, is the highest ranked player to enter, while India's European Tour professional Shiv Kapur will also be one to watch.

Picture: GETTY IMAGES

Racing team back on the road to Le Mans

By STEVE TERVET

JOTA Sport will once again compete at one of the world's most prestigious motor races this summer after gaining entry into the Le Mans 24 hours.

The team, based near Tunbridge Wells, will enter as one of only two British teams in the GT Pro class, alongside Le Mans heavyweights BMW Motorsport and Corvette.

Sam Hancock, Jota co-owner, said he was hugely relieved to have been handed a place at Le Mans but insisted his feet would remain firmly on the ground as preparations continued for the new season.

Speaking from team testing at Spain's Navarra circuit, he said: "It's everything because the 24 hours at Le Mans is the sun around which everything else orbits in the type of motor racing we do. It's the big one, it attracts the sponsors and it's the one all the drivers want to do.

"We're talking about the very best motor racing teams outside Formula 1, from all over the world. We're all racers so we want to go and win, but we have to be careful to manage our expectations because we're up against some of the top factory teams.

THE BIG ONE: Jota Sport at the Le Mans 24 hours back in 2008

"We are really up against the big boys but we'd like to think we are heading in that direction if we're not there yet. I don't know how many apply, but you can be sure there will be a lot of disappointed teams. It was quite shocking looking at the names of teams who didn't get in and it makes it more satisfying that we made it."

Hancock, who set up Jota in 2000, will drive for the team at Le Mans alongside Simon Dolan, making his race debut, while the third driver has yet to be announced.

This year's race, which takes place on June 11-12, will feature 54 other teams and Hancock revealed how he had feared the worst prior to last week's entry announcements.

"We always hoped we'd get in because we'd made a very credible application, so we liked to think we were a team worthy of an entry, but you can never be sure. There are many teams who are credible and worthy so it's a very big deal.

"When they were making the announcement live on Le Mans radio, I was listening over the internet on my iPhone while driving on the M25. It kept cutting out and I was seriously worrying for a few minutes but when it cut back in, I heard our name.

"It's Simon's first year at this level, it's his first time at Le Mans. We're going head-to-head with some of the world's top GT racing teams with all-professional line-ups, so we're fighting with the big boys and that will make the challenge tougher."

Picture: ADY KERRY

SWITCH: Shaunagh Brown is to turn her focus to the shot and away from the discus

Final throw nets Brown PB and UK indoor silver

A PERSONAL best with her last throw of the competition earned Shaunagh Brown a silver medal at the UK Indoor Championships last weekend.

The 20-year-old was languishing in sixth position out of seven until the final round of the women's shot put in Sheffield. A throw of 14.91-metres beat her previous indoor best by 21 centimetres and saw the Blackheath & Bromley Harrier claim silver behind national outdoor champion Eden Francis.

The high-class field included world and European heptathlon champion Jessica Ennis and Brown, who is the reigning Kent county champion in shot, discus and hammer, was delighted to finish on the podium in her first senior event.

She said: "I was surprised to win a medal, but in terms of the distance I wasn't particularly happy because I wanted to throw 15-metres plus.

"I was so proud because it was my first senior championship full stop. It was a shock really and a great start to the season."

The placing would have been good enough for a spot in the British team heading to the European Athletics Indoor Championships in Paris next month, but Brown has not thrown the qualifying distance.

On recent form it is only a matter of time before further honours come her way. Last weekend's event was the third in a row she had set a personal best and Brown's big aim for the year is to break 16-metres outdoors.

After spending a large part of her junior years as a discus thrower, Brown is now putting more emphasis on the shot as a future specialism.

She said: "It's changing over. I was always a discus thrower right from the beginning. Last year I didn't have much of a good season, but the shot was right up there and I'm concentrating more on that and see where that gets me."

Gymnasts to line up against Olympians

MAIDSTONE gymnasts Courtney Tulloch (pictured) and James Hall have a rare chance to challenge the country's top seniors this week as they head to the English Championships in Stoke-on-Trent.

After top-five finishes in the youth class of last year's British Championships, Tulloch and Hall will now face Olympians Louis Smith and Daniel Keatings.

The pair, who train at Pegasus Gymnastics Club in Bearsted, will face competitors up to 10 years their senior.

Competition at the Fenton Manor Sports Complex runs from Friday to Sunday.

House season to start in Jo'burg

KRISTIAN House gets his cycling season under way this weekend in the Tour of South Africa.

Picture: CHERYL KING

It marks an early start to the calendar for the 31-year-old, who in previous years has waited until late-March to begin the campaign in earnest.

The 2009 British road race champion who grew up near Canterbury, will need to hit the ground running in the eight-day tour.

His Rapha Condor Sharp team take on teams from France, Spain, the United States and the Russian national team.

The race begins with two stages of about 100 miles around Johannesburg and Pretoria. Next week it heads south to Port Elizabeth and spends four days heading along the coast, finishing in Cape Town next Saturday.

First-round exit for duo in Wales

NEITHER of the county's top two snooker players were able to build on emphatic qualifying victories in the main draw of the Wales Open this week.

Both Barry Hawkins (pictured) and Gerard Greene suffered first round defeats to top eight players at the Newport Centre.

Hawkins, from Dartford, is ranked 27 in the world, and breezed past Andy Hicks 4-0 in qualifying to set up a last-32 tie with last year's beaten finalist Ali Carter. The pair shared the first six frames, but Carter clinched the deciding frame for a 4-3 win.

Greene, from Rainham, also had a qualifying whitewash, beating Ian McCulloch 4-0. He came from 2-0 down to draw level with Stephen Maguire, but breaks of 72 and 87 saw the Scot through to a last-16 meeting with Stephen Hendry.

County rugby team bid for semi-finals

A DIVISIONAL semi-final awaits Kent's under-20 rugby side after they claimed top spot in their pool with a convincing win over Sussex last weekend.

Having upset regional favourites Surrey in their first game of the championship, Kent beat Sussex 32-14 at Old Elthamians RFC on Sunday.

The remaining pool games are played on Sunday and Kent will join the other two London & South East group winners plus the best runner-up at the divisional play-off at Old Albanians RFC on March 6.

Benefit year for Kent skipper, but promotion is top priority

'Here's to a good year on and off the pitch'

MY BENEFIT year got off to the best possible start with a complete sell-out at my launch event in Maidstone towards the end of last month, and I hope that is a good sign for what is to come in 2011 – on the field as well as off it.

There were almost 400 people at the lunch and I am enormously grateful to all those who helped make the day a success, especially Alison Patel, Bob 'The Cat' Bevan and Steve Harmison, who came all the way from Durham to support me and entertain the guests with some very interesting thoughts about cricket and his own career with England.

I have about 10 events or so being organised for the rest of the year, including some in Guernsey and in London as well as in different parts of Kent. Why Guernsey? Well, that's where my bat sponsor Cenkos are based, and I am also hoping that Freddie Flintoff – like Harmy a good friend of mine – will be one of those supporting me in Guernsey.

So there's a lot to look forward to in 2011, but I must also say at this stage that my main focus will always be on my cricket and how Kent play this summer. I need to get back to scoring big numbers of runs, and consistently, and for that reason alone I cannot wait for the season to start.

It has been a funny sort of winter, what with the benefit to organise and because so few of the Kent players have been around.

Pictures: ADY KERRY

BIG YEAR: Rob Key launched his benefit year with a lunch in Maidstone where ex-England paceman Steve Harmison (right) talked about his career

Only myself, Simon Cook and Geraint Jones have been here throughout the winter, but at least we have been training regularly together and, when all the players report back to Canterbury on March 11 for our pre-season training, it will be good to get down to concentrating on our preparation as a group.

Development work at the St Lawrence Ground has been moving forward at some pace since last autumn, and I think our supporters will be amazed by the changes and upgrading of certain buildings that will be in place by the start of the new season.

Everyone knows just how tough an environment it is financially at the moment, but the development getting under way has at last brought an improvement in the club's cash flow – in addition to the positive feel of the work itself – and that has been a big boost to everyone.

With a small but tight-knit staff, there is going to be huge opportunities this season for younger players like Matt Coles and Alex Blake to step up and make big strides forward.

Contracts have been getting sorted out, including that of Martin van Jaarsveld, who I am delighted has recommitted himself to Kent, and by the start of the season we should be in a good position to go forward as a team.

This season promotion back up to the top flight in the county championship at the first attempt has to be our major priority. We did it in 2009, and we can do it again.

It has been pleasing to hear more good reports coming back from Perth on Robbie Joseph's continued rehabilitation and return to full fitness. As I've said before, I believe Robbie can emulate Martin Saggers and have his best years as a fast bowler at the back end of his career.

Robbie, who has just turned 29, has relatively few miles on the clock and, when he bowled a little bit at me in the nets before he travelled out to Australia, I thought he bowled better than he had done at any stage last summer when he was trying to make his previous comeback from surgery.

What was particularly encouraging was that Robbie was not experiencing any pain at all when he was bowling. Hopefully, as we wait to hear how he has got on in stepping up his bowling outdoors in Perth, that is a good sign.

• Rob Key, the Kent captain and former England batsman, is one of Kent on Sunday's regular sports columnists.

Your chance to pick mascot

KENT members and supporters have been asked to vote on the design for the club's new mascot after St Lawrence bosses opted to replace 'Bomber'.

Bomber's replacement will be either a horse or a pilot after the club produced two new designs in association with the Deeson Group.

Kent chief executive, Jamie Clifford, said: "We feel the time is right to 'retire' Bomber. We want our young members and supporters to pick the winning design from the two options. Both line up well with the history of Kent Cricket.

"The fighter pilot continues the Spitfire theme whilst the other proudly shows off the Invicta horse in all its glory. We are thrilled with the design work of the Deeson Group and now want the children of Kent to select their new hero."

Members and supporters can have their say on the new mascot by voting at www.kentcricket.co.uk.

Elsewhere, the county have switched their Annual General Meeting to April so it can be held at the club's St Lawrence Ground.

The AGM was due to take place on March 21, but has now been put back to April 5 as a result of ongoing construction work at St Lawrence.

Entrance to the Canterbury ground has been difficult with work at both entrances well under way, but a date shift will now mean members will be able to park on site.

Take care when dabbling with the magic of the cup

COMMENT

By sports reporter **DAVID PRITCHARD**

THE FA Cup still occupies a special place in the hearts of many, so the far-reaching proposals being considered to shake-up the competition are likely to cause some alarm.

Seeding, the removal of replays, an evening kick-off for the final, regional draws until the latter stages are some of the ideas which are being looked into by the Football Association.

It has become a cliché over the last decade to discuss whether or not the competition still has its 'magic'.

On the one hand it is hard to argue that the greatest domestic cup competition of them all has not lost some of its lustre, put in the shade by the bright lights of the Premier League and Champions League.

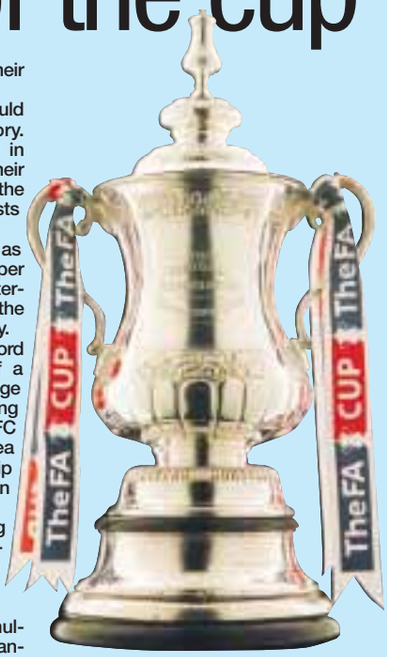
It has become depressing to see a trickle down effect of clubs who now prioritise the league over everything else. A cup run now seems to be seen as counter productive, with even clubs outside the top flight rotating their best players to keep them fresh for the league campaign. Fans, quite rightly, vote with their feet and take an afternoon off.

It is not so long ago when clubs would sacrifice themselves for cup glory. Oldham's run to a semi-final replay in 1994 undoubtedly played a role in their relegation from the top flight, while the same could be argued for losing finalists Middlesbrough in 1997.

Earlier in the competition it remains as strong as ever. The first-round proper last November was a memorable afternoon with five Kent clubs in action – the best showing for almost half a century.

Under the proposed changes Dartford would not have got the chance of a replay at Port Vale, likewise Stonebridge Road would never have hosted a thrilling second meeting of Ebbsfleet and AFC Wimbledon, while the regional idea means Hythe Town's first round trip would have been a lot more local than Hereford.

There is little doubt something needs to be done, possibly by offering a Champions League spot to the winners. It should be remembered the FA Cup has been tinkered with before, no one appears to miss the multiple replays of yesteryear, but the danger is the changes merely accelerate the decline.



CHANGES: But the FA must make the right decisions for the cup's future

Adebayo at the double

Generous Gills ace says he is more than happy to lay on the goals for strike partner McDonald

By DAVID PRITCHARD

TO BE a successful double act, both halves need to know their place and the strengths they bring to the partnership.

Every funny man needs a straight man alongside him to tee up the jokes and not hog the limelight, just as superheroes need a reliable sidekick.

Despite possessing a physique which makes him stand out, Adebayo Akinfenwa is perfectly content to stay out of the headlines.

Strikers can so often be the most selfish of animals, but the 28-year-old has been genuinely thrilled to help Cody McDonald attract all the attention up front for Gillingham this season.

Generous

Before this weekend Akinfenwa had eight goals to McDonald's 17, but the bare statistics do little to sum up his impact. Once the rest of his team-mates worked out how to get the best out of the striker's physical presence he has become the fulcrum of their attacks, expertly bringing others into play and fashioning a host of chances.

Norwich loanee McDonald is always the first to credit his success to his generous strike partner, but it works both ways.

After joining the Gills last summer from Northampton, where he was the team's chief goal threat, Akinfenwa feels McDonald's record has allowed him to focus on other parts of his game.

He said: "I think subconsciously because Cody is so on form at the moment I can just concentrate more on my team game rather than scoring.

"I'll always back myself to score goals but I do enjoy setting them up, it makes me look good. Football is a team game and everybody plays their roles. I still want to score, but if we win and I don't [score] then I'm not losing any sleep over it. I do go home happy if I have a good game and I've contributed.

"No disrespect to Northampton, but we have more quality players at Gillingham, so the onus on me to score isn't there as much. I think this season as a team player my team game has developed even more. I feel my link-up play has improved."

Gillingham is Akinfenwa's 10th club in Britain and his career has seen him play with his fair share of strikers. He rates McDonald highly and the forward reminds him of former Swansea team-mate Lee Trundle.

Akinfenwa said: "I think Cody's way too good for this league and minimum Championship-level football is where he can play. I do think our partnership at the moment is very potent – I'm bringing them in and he's scoring the goals."

Akinfenwa has tasted triumph and disaster in recent seasons. A league championship with Doncaster and winner in the Football League Trophy while at Swansea is interspersed with two relegations and a missed penalty in a play-off final shoot-out.

Promotion with Gillingham this season would rank among the best moments of his career, but he is aware of the magnitude of the task which still lies ahead.

Akinfenwa said: "I'm pretty confident with the squad we've got and the way we're playing that we can do it. We've put ourselves in a good position, but if you look at it the real hard work starts now."

DEADLY DUO: Adebayo Akinfenwa's partnership with Cody McDonald (above left) has played a big part in Gillingham's revival this season Pictures: ADY KERRY

Dolan hopes to breathe new life into county cup

PLANS are afoot to revamp the Kent Senior Cup in time for next season's competition, ***writes Glenn Pearson.***

The Kent County Football Association (KCFA), which runs the tournament, is looking to inject some life back into a cup competition that has dropped down the pecking order for a vast number of the county's senior clubs in recent years.

One idea mooted is to encourage the county's only Football League club, Gillingham, as well as Charlton Athletic and Millwall – both affiliated members of the KCFA – to help breathe life into the Kent Senior Cup next season.

The competition, born in the 1889-90 season when it was won by Plumstead-based Royal Arsenal, has seen clubs use fringe and reserve team players in cup matches.

But crowds have dwindled away; Maidstone United's Kent Senior Cup game with Ebbsfleet in January was watched by just 87 supporters.

Now KCFA chief executive Paul Dolan, who took over from Keith Masters at the start of the month, is looking to consult with the county's senior clubs about how to make the competition more attractive.

Pictures: KEN MEDWYN

CHANGE: Kent FA boss Paul Dolan is hoping to revamp the Kent Senior Cup (holders Sittingbourne pictured) by attracting the likes of Gills back

"We are certainly going to look at the Kent Senior Cup and work towards trying to make that more attractive.

"I think part of the problem has been the fixtures and getting them played by a particular date as that's had a knock-on effect and meant in a previous season we had to play the final in the following pre-season. I think that devalues the competition so we need to get them played early enough so the competition doesn't just become an add on for the clubs.

"We want the first teams of the senior clubs playing in it and then it's whether we can attract some of the other senior clubs back into it, like Gillingham, Charlton and Millwall. That is maybe something we need to look in to."

MyFC members' renewal crucial to Fleet's budget

THE PIVOTAL point of Ebbsfleet United's year has arrived as Stonebridge Road bosses wait to learn how many MyFootballClub members have renewed their annual subscriptions.

Membership levels will go a long way to determining the Fleet's playing budget for next season, with manager Liam Daish keen to offer deals to several of his key players before the summer.

Since MyFC membership levels peaked at around 30,000 in 2008, renewals have dropped away alarmingly and just over 4,000 subscribers remain three years on.

Almost half of those memberships were due for renewal on Saturday and the figures, which come out this week, are likely to map out the prospects of Daish retaining the bulk of his squad or once again having to build from scratch.

Of this season's Ebbsfleet squad, only five players experienced first-team action at Stonebridge Road in 2009-10 and Daish stressed how significant renewal levels remained if he was to achieve any sort of consistency.

He said: "I am very aware how crucial the amount of members who renew is, and the effect it will have on the future of this football club, not just until the end of season, but also for next season and its planning.

Picture: DAVE PLUMB

FUNDS: Liam Daish (right) says MyFC plays a huge part in his ability to strengthen his squad

"We have been able to maintain the squad and hopefully it will prove good enough to stay in the pack of contenders until the end of the season and beyond. Obviously the [MyFC] society has and will play a big part going forward in where we go from here."

Ebbsfleet remain well in contention for promotion back to Conference Premier at the first attempt, with 15 league games still to be played this season. On Wednesday, Daish takes his side to face Lewes.

BLAKE: LEAVING KENT NEVER ON THE CARDS

Batsman relieved to have signed a new three-year deal with county

EXCLUSIVE

By **GLENN PEARSON**

ALEX Blake insists he had no intentions of leaving Kent after drawn-out contract negotiations finally ended this week with the batsman signing a new three-year deal.

The 22-year-old Kent Academy graduate was out of contract at the end of the 2011 season and the club were keen to tie him down on a long-term deal after showing promise in his first full season with the county.

After lengthy discussions over the winter, the Farnborough-born left-hander signed a deal three weeks before the Kent squad meet up for pre-season, which will keep him at St Lawrence until the end of the 2013 season – as exclusively revealed on our website www.kentsport.co.uk.

Blake himself admitted finalising the details of his future took longer than he would have liked, but was keen to stress he was never interested in looking for a move away from the county.

He said: "I was a little bit worried [about the speculation] and I didn't want people to think I wanted to go elsewhere; it was never my intention to leave. It did drag on for a bit, but I was always confident that it would be sorted and I would sign for Kent.

"It was never my intention to ever run down my contract or to leave Kent; I'm more than happy here, that's where I've grown up playing my cricket, having come through the Academy and [director of cricket] Paul Farbrace is a close coach to me and I respect him highly.

"I'm just happy it's done now and I can concentrate on cricket, and I'm pleased with the three years as that shows the club are keen to show commitment and put their faith in the youngsters."

Blake, who follows Matt Coles, Darren Stevens and Ashley Shaw in signing new contracts this winter, will be available for the entire summer as he is set to complete his final year of studies in sport, leisure and culture at Leeds Metropolitan University before the summer.

Top of his priorities for this coming season is forcing his way into Kent's county championship side after having become an important member of the middle order in the limited overs competitions. His cause will be furthered by the unbeaten 105, his maiden first-class hundred, that he scored in Kent's win at Yorkshire in the final game of last season. It proved to be more than just a milestone for a player that has progressed right the way through the Kent system.

"To finish off the season the way I did at Headingley was nice to prove not only to Kent but myself that I could cut it at that level," he said.

"The main thing with scoring that hundred was that it gave me the confidence and belief that I can play at that level. Self-doubt is a big issue with me so to get a hundred there, and in Division One, was a massive thing and I hope to do it consistently from now on."

The right-arm medium pacer has also been working hard on his bowling during the winter and is hoping to prove to skipper Rob Key he can form part of the county's bowling attack as an all-rounder.

Blake said: "The key thing for me this season will be my bowling as I'm trying to become a genuine all-rounder. I've got a lot of hard work to do, but if I can get my bowling as well as my batting, then that will give me a stronger chance of a good run in the side."

SHAKE ON IT: Alex Blake (right) – being congratulated by his friend and Yorkshire player Jonathon Bairstow after completing his maiden century at Headingley last season – has put pen to a three-year deal after a lengthy bout of contract negotiations Picture: ADY KERRY

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Gills kick-off Akinfenwa contract talks

EXCLUSIVE

By **DAVID PRITCHARD**

CONTRACT talks have begun between Gillingham and Adebayo Akinfenwa to keep the striker at Priestfield beyond this summer.

The 28-year-old was given a one-season deal when he signed for the Gills last summer, joining as a free agent after turning down a new contract at Northampton Town.

Following a relatively slow start to his Gillingham career, Akinfenwa has become a key player in the side's upturn in form.

Used as a foil for top-scorer Cody McDonald, the pair have built a good understanding and are now one of the most dangerous partnerships in League Two.

The Gills will be keen to keep hold of him and have begun tentative negotiations, although any prospect of a deal remains at least several weeks away.

Akinfenwa remains relaxed about his contract situation and is happy to wait until after the end of the season to make a decision if nothing can be agreed beforehand.

He said: "We've started contract talks for next season, it's just at a preliminary stage.

"At the moment I'm happy at Gillingham, I do hope we get promoted and that's the aim because I do want to play at as high a level as possible. We'll see how the season pans out, but I'm happy with how things are going.

"I'll see how it goes, we've only just started talking about contracts recently. It's not like I'm banging down the chairman's door saying I want something done now.

"Whatever is meant to be will be."

• *See inside for the full story.*

POWER-HOUSE: Striker Adebayo Akinfenwa has become a key player after a slow start at Gillingham Picture: ADY KERRY

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*NB Approval of a business does not mean that the Trading Standards Service can guarantee its financial stability or has individually checked the quality of any goods or services provided. Trading standards cannot give any guarantee or warranty as to the value for money of goods or services compared with a competitor, or that they will be satisfactory"

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The secrets of a good hedge

By HANNAH STEPHENSON

HEDGES can be the making of a garden, providing clear boundaries and acting as a windbreak and a handsome green backdrop to other plants.

A neglected hedge, on the other hand, can be a total eyesore, especially if it's bare at the base or totally out of shape, due to lack of pruning.

Late winter is an ideal time to cut back tough hedges such as beech, pyracantha, yew (which is the only conifer that will re-shoot from old wood), holly and hawthorn. They can be cut back hard to rejuvenate and reshape them, and regrowth will start almost immediately. If you feed the hedge the growing season before, it should come back healthy and vigorous.

As a rule, it's best to prune deciduous types in late winter and evergreens in spring. Feed and mulch in mid-spring, and water during dry weather. Fill in unsightly gaps in the hedge with smaller plants and avoid trying to match a plant with the height of an existing hedge.

Be warned, though, that newcomers have to compete for food, moisture and light with the bigger, established plants, which is why the failure rate with infilling is pretty high.

Box hedging won't be harmed by hard pruning. A bush can be drastically cut back in spring, but to avoid large bare patches, stagger the work over two to three seasons.

Use sharp secateurs to prune holly hedges and evergreen cherry laurels as the large glossy leaves turn brown and look terrible if they're chopped in half with shears. Use a bow-saw for thick branches, loppers for smaller ones and secateurs for twiggy growth.

HEDGING BETS: It's important to match your pruning tools to the hedge you are trimming

If you're cutting back an old yew hedge, do it so that it's broader at the bottom than at the top, which will result in it being less vulnerable to snow damage and, more importantly, the growth at the bottom of the hedge receives as much light as the growth at the top, so it's not likely to become bare again in the future.

To make the job easier, lay hessian or sheets of polythene at the base of the hedge to gather the clippings.

If a conifer hedge has become bare at the base, consider growing other plants in front of it to cover the gaps, such as *Euonymus fortunei* 'Emerald'n'Gold' or 'Emerald Gaiety', which are perfect for shady spots and will brighten up the plain-green foliage of a hedge.

Other plants that will grow happily at the base of a hedge include spurge, euphorbia and alchemilla, while in sunny spots you may be better off with lavender, herbs such as rosemary and sage, and berberis.

Consider exactly what effect you are after. Filling in gaps is all very well, but unless you are careful what you choose and space out fill-in plants evenly, your boundary could end up looking like a bit of a dog's dinner.

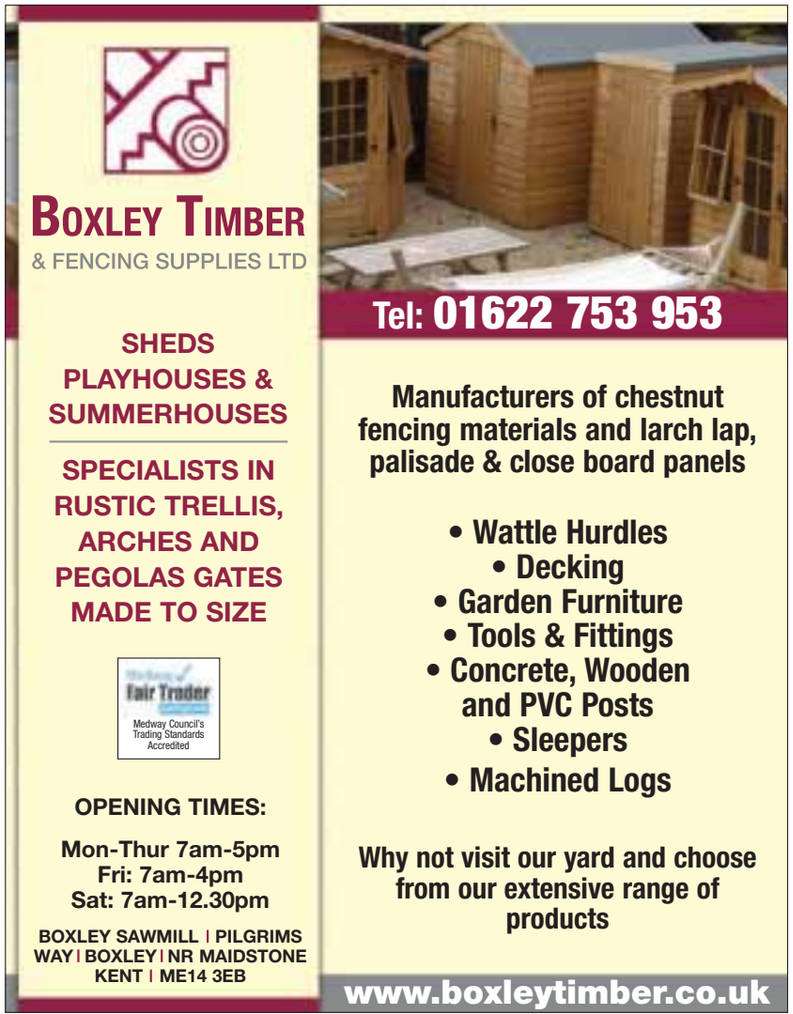
Cutting a hedge back hard should be done in stages as it takes quite a lot out of the plant. In year one, the top and one side can be pruned, the opposite side in year two.

Start from the bottom and work upwards and, if possible, shred the clippings and put them on the compost heap as you go along.

The top of the hedge should be trimmed last. It may look drastic, but don't worry, it will recover.

Once your hedge has reached its required height and thickness, it should only need clipping once a year in August, or in the case of fast-growing hedges like leylandii, in May as well.

Whatever method of hedge-pruning you take, look out for birds' nests and don't disturb any that you come across.



Keep it cool with pastel

To get the latest cool-interiors trend into your home, think about decorating and accessorising with sorbet colours. Mellow lemons, mint greens, strawberry and berry tones are all en vogue right now. EVE KELLY, editor of HomesAndBargains.co.uk, has picked out a selection of tasteful home treats to freshen your domestic palate

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POTTED GARDEN: Pots are an ideal way to create a rooftop display without too much expense

Planning your urban oasis up on the roof

By HANNAH STEPHENSON

IMAGINE being cooped up in an office all day and then returning to your urban home and walking out on to a rooftop that has been transformed into a tapestry of colour, texture and calm.

Rooftop gardening can help combat climate change by lowering surrounding air temperatures, according to a recent RHS survey and, with this in mind, the organisation is encouraging urbanites to make the most out of their outdoor space and help the environment by growing plants.

"Getting planting right in urban spaces, which can be very limited, can have a major effect in not only helping reduce to urban temperatures, but will also provide other environmental benefits," said Tijana Blanusa, who undertook the RHS research.

Other benefits of green-roof gardening include heat insulation, water absorption, providing a safe environment for wildlife and soaking up pollution.

The RHS showcased two modern rooftop gardens designed by two rising stars, Hugo Bugg, RHS Young Designer of the Year 2010, and Melissa Jolly, winner of a BBC Gardeners' World 2010 award, at the RHS London Plant and Design Show.

Their designs are aspirational, but it's not impossible to create your own roof garden, whether you just want a few pots or a raised bed or two, or a more elaborate green carpet, providing your structure is secure. The RHS offers the following advice:

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Dig in if you want pick of the crop

BARE-ROOTED cane fruits, including blackberries, raspberries and hybrid berry canes, can be planted up until the end of the month. You'll need to prepare the soil thoroughly by digging a trench along the proposed row and working in plenty of organic matter.

All these cane fruits, apart from autumn-fruiting raspberries, will need support for their fruiting canes, which can be done with posts at either end of the row and a minimum of three horizontal wires attached to the posts at even intervals.

If you are using a wall or fence for blackberries (raspberries prefer to be in the open), attach the wires to vine eyes screwed into the wall. Bare-rooted raspberries should be planted about 45cm (18in) apart, while blackberries and hybrid berries need more space so should be planted at least 1.5m (5ft) apart, or more.

Prune newly-planted canes to around 22cm (9in) from the ground to encourage the production of strong canes from the base of the plant. Tie them to the wire as they grow through the season, but don't harvest them this year, and remove flowers if there are a lot of them, which will encourage a better crop next season.

• Before designing any addition to a property's roof ,check if planning permission is required.
• How much weight can the roof take? Large containers full of compost and plants weigh a considerable amount. There will be strict weight restrictions on balconies suspended out from the building.
• Check if the roof is waterproof, using the services of a chartered structural engineer or a surveyor. You may have to modify roof supports if the structural survey shows that support is insufficient. Erecting a 'false' floor is a common method, where the roof surface is partly or completely suspended above the existing roof, directing weight on to surrounding walls.
• Use an architect specialising in roof-garden design for complex projects.
• Place heavy containers near load-bearing walls or over a load-bearing beam or joist as these can take more weight than unsupported areas.
• The main limitations of roof gardens and balconies are strong winds and sunshine. Take advantage of any existing protection, such as walls or fences, that provide shelter and shade.
• Use slatted or mesh screens that filter the wind, creating a micro-climate for the plants within.
• Containers will dry out rapidly in windy, hot weather, so make sure they are a good width and depth.
• Choose non-porous materials (plastic, metal and fibreglass) rather than terracotta as they reduce moisture loss.
• Ensure the container is lightweight and has ample drainage holes in the base.
• Some companies, such as Green Tech Ltd, offer a range of lightweight soils and composts suitable for roof gardening.
• Use a layer of lightweight drainage material at the base of the container, such as polystyrene plant trays broken into 'crocks'.
• A soil-based compost is better for its water-holding capacity than a peat-substitute mix, but it will be heavier.
• If weight is a consideration, fix the container down, so that it doesn't blow over.
• Install an irrigation system where cost-effective (in larger areas), ensuring excess run-off flows to a drainpipe outlet. In smaller areas, hand-water as it's more accurate.
• Feed plants regularly. Controlled-release fertiliser in the compost is the easiest way.
• Top-dress pots annually, replacing the top few centimetres with fresh compost.
• Liquid-feed any annual plants used in plantings from May to September to give the best flowering results.

LIGHT AND SHADE: Make the most of shelter when planning a balcony garden

HEIGHT OF CHIC: This modern rooftop garden designed by Melissa Jolly, winner of a BBC Gardeners' World 2010 award, is ideal for city living

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Getting on top of damp problems

SPRING will be here in a few weeks, so it's time to start thinking about tackling those jobs on the outside of your property.

You might consider repairing guttering or checking the roof for missing or broken slates – work that you may have put off in bad weather.

But there's one thing you cannot afford to leave for another day. Have you noticed the wallpaper peeling in some of your rooms? Can you see traces of mould? Are the skirting boards looking a bit dodgy? Is there an odd, musty smell everywhere and in your clothes and towels?

If you answer yes to these questions, you've probably got damp. And once it's got a hold, it can cause untold problems.

You've really got to get rid of the damp first, then cope with the disruption that installing preventative measures like a damp-proof course can create.

But actually you can tackle damp quickly and efficiently without the mess – inside aynd out.

And you can do it in a way that's eco-friendly (using no chemicals), permanent and carries a 20-year guarantee. And, what's more, you won't have to redecorate!

Holland Damp Proofing's innovative method works on most types of wall, so it doesn't matter whether you live in a mansion or a maisonette, a bungalow or a bijou apartment.

It involves fitting damp-regulating bricks into specially-prepared niches in external walls – as seen on the photographs – to evaporate moisture and dry out walls, allowing the property to breathe and subsequently dry out.

• ***For more information about tacking problems with damp, phone Holland Damp Proofing on 0808 155 2571.***

ECO-FRIENDLY: Damp-regulating bricks can be fitted to external niches in any kind of house, from a modern new-build to a listed mansion, with no great impact on the external appearance

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Diarmuid on design

ONCE renowned for his innovative modernist designs, Diarmuid Gavin says that trends are heading increasingly towards a return to traditional gardens, where the plants are the stars.

He's pleased that the age of shiny stainless steel, bright-blue fences and decking once embraced by TV shows has ended.

Having just launched the Ideal Home Show's first garden design competition to celebrate the best examples of sustainable practice in garden design and to support young and emerging UK students in the field, he's expecting a rush of eco-awareness.

"There will be a generation of students who grew up in a time when gardening was manic on television. I'm expecting big eco-awareness. That generation will know how important it is in terms of sourcing materials, saving water and making compost. I would hope for a refinement of all the madder ideas that have been around for years."

He continued: "The wheel is turning back to the craft of gardening. People's first love is plants, understanding the soil and understanding the environment. That's the very trendy thing, which is healthy."

Fruit- and vegetable-growing will continue this year and in the longer term, he predicts.

"The big trend will remain 'grow-it-yourself'. Companies will come out with kit forms of raised beds made from wood, compost mixes and seed mixes, along with manuals on how to grow basic vegetables to educate your children and feed your family.

"In terms of materials and planting schemes, it's back to the style of garden we remember from our childhood. The grander, more old-fashioned style [and] colour in terms of herbaceous plants and a kind of appreciation of tradition.

"A lot of natural stone will be used and salvage material will be appreciated. There will be less concrete."

These days, Diarmuid agrees that he is commissioned to design much more traditional gardens in general.

"People want to be comforted and indulged. They want to see the qualities of tradition for which Britain is so well known. They want to embrace tradition in a realistic way."

But for people who have smaller town gardens and not much time for maintenance, minimalist will always be in vogue, he says, while the popularity of low-maintenance plants is surging.

"The arrival of ornamental plants such as grasses, mass planting of lavender and *Buxus sempervirens* in a more contemporary way works very well, so keep it simple.

"There will be more evergreens, and people will appreciate grasses like carex. If you planted bronze carex a few years ago, people thought you were planting something that was dead.

"Now there's a more naturalistic feel through an appreciation of foliage and different hues, supplemented with bulbs. It's uncomplicated but wonderful."

He is currently having his garden in Co Wicklow completely refurbished and says it will all centre on herbaceous borders, with a folly at the end.

He notes that after two harsh winters, gardeners will need to reconsider which species they grow.

"Dicksonias (tree ferns) have taken a bashing. We used to use *Cordyline australis* everywhere, but many have been killed off. We have to decide whether to go for the exotic if we don't live in a protected area.

"Perennials are the quintessential basis for the English cottage garden. Now with Monty Don coming back to Gardeners' World, I think they have a very promising future."

• Diarmuid Gavin is the 'ideal gardens' ambassador at the Ideal Home Show, sponsored by Hydropool, at London's Earls Court, March 11-27. He will be at the show offering advice on home garden innovations. You can book your tickets at www.idealhomeshow.co.uk or phone 0844 415 4144.

Grow your own with Dirty Nails

EARLY SPUDS

POTATOES are a valuable food crop. Grow a selection to adorn the dinner table virtually year-round.

There are dozens of varieties to choose from in a multitude of different shapes, sizes, textures and flavours.

Spuds which are cultivated by kitchen gardeners or allotment-holders are descended from Central American stock. Selective breeding over the last few hundred years has enhanced the desirable qualities that growers look for in this vegetable.

High up in the Andes, however, wild potatoes are generally smaller, darker specimens. They find a home in thin, mountainous soils and rocky crevices. Black, brown, even blue, they are choc-full of health-enhancing anti-oxidants (a natural response by the plant to surviving in high altitudes with low oxygen levels).

First Early spuds (for example, Aaron Pilot) go in the ground around mid-March. Bunches of flowers start to appear on the extensive top growth (haulm) in mid-June, a sign that generous portions of 'new potatoes' are ready to be lifted and eaten as desired.

Second Earlies are planted a fortnight or so later, maturing in July. Kestrel is a consistent and reliable performer in this category. They may be consumed there and then, or stored for a few months in a dry, airy and dark place.

Maincrop varieties can occupy a place in the plot from April to September. Dig them up in the autumn and store carefully throughout the winter. Sarpo spuds are Dirty Nails' maincrop of choice. Viable supplies from last year are still an important mealtime ingredient even now, six months after harvesting.

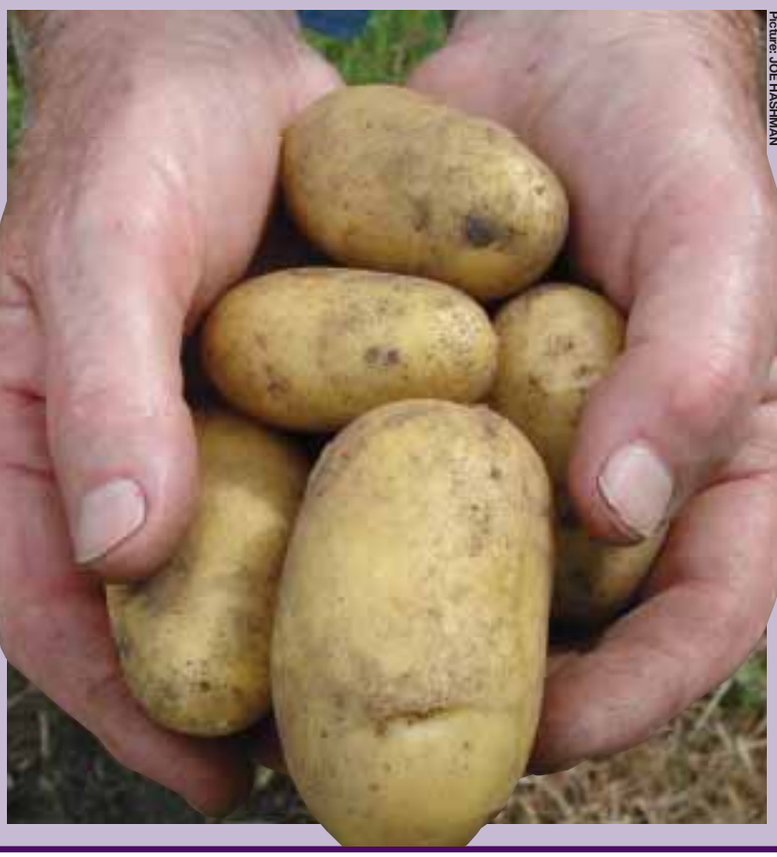
To secure an extra-early bounty, nurture a few plants in old 60- or 70-litre compost bags. This method is easy, clean, and ideal if space is limited. After making a few drainage holes in the bag bottom with a knife-blade, simply reverse it so that the light- and heat-absorbing black interior is on the outside.

Then roll the sides down to create a kind of floppy bucket. Put about 15cm of rich soil or fresh compost into the customised bag.

Place a couple of individual First Early potatoes on to this. Add a further 10cm layer of compost, and that is virtually job done. The spuds in bags can go in the greenhouse or porch, where extra warmth will stimulate quick growth.

Potatoes are hungry and thirsty, so a weekly liquid feed with diluted, home-made nettle and comfrey (or a shop-bought seaweed brew) won't go amiss. As green leaves appear, the bag sides can be rolled up and more compost added to repeatedly almost cover them. When full and sporting a canopy of leaves, beginning to produce clusters of pretty little blooms, it's harvest time. The bag can be sliced open and, all being well, a mass of beautiful 'apples of the earth' will spill out like a magical haul of golden nuggets.

• Pocket Guide To The Edible Garden: What To Do And When, Month By Month, by Joe Hashman (ISBN 9781905862360) is available now, rrp £9.99, at www.dirtynails.co.uk or amazon.co.uk.



Picture: JOE HASHMAN

FIRST CROP: Plant first early or 'new' potatoes in March, for harvesting in June

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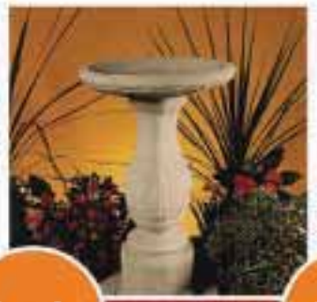

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